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CHRISTIANITY AND CHRIST

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PROVIDENCE AND FAITH

WHERE SCIENCE AND RELIGION MEET

ESSAYS ON "CREATION AND PROVIDENCE" AND "ATONEMENT" IN

FAITH AND FREEDOM

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRIST

BY

WILLIAM SCOTT PALMER

"He goeth back that continueth not."

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PREFATORY NOTE

TWELVE years ago I was profoundly influenced by the critical examination of Christian documents and of Christian origins, by science generally and by the new movement in philosophy. I felt impelled to revise my religious beliefs. It was a kind of stocktaking, and took the form of a diary, now long out of print.

Many trials have come upon the Christian religion and the Church since then. It seems to be time for a new stocktaking on my part; and I propose to write a new diary and in it ask my new questions and find, perhaps, new answers. If I use the old one to confirm or illustrate this, I hope I shall be forgiven by any readers who chance to recognize quotations from it. I shall use them only when I am sure of their being both appropriate and significant in the new context.

W. S. P.

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CHRISTIANITY AND CHRIST

December 5th.—I have been reading two books, *The Jesus of History* and *By an Unknown Disciple;* I have tried and failed to read again Seeley's *Ecce Homo;* and I have read the Fourth Gospel with my mind looking to the contrast with it that those other two present. Dr. Glover, no doubt, has in reserve his picture of the Christ Jesus given in that Gospel; but the creator of the Unknown Disciple, like many religious people who are not Christians yet live where Christians are, is blind to St. John's Christ Jesus, to the Eternal Christ he shows. It is a blindness easy to account for, and I have not the slightest doubt of its being due to the fault of Christians. If they had learnt as they might have learnt from St. John (let us continue to call that unnamed mystic and philosopher St. John) they could not have perverted the faith of Christ into a rationalized, mechanized, theologized scheme of a man who was no man and a God masquerading as man.

These are strong words, and emotion has a good deal to do with them. I am indignant

where I should be calmly sympathetic. We who are Christians are most of us only plain men even when we are scholars and theologians. We have learnt in an all too plain school to use words and think thoughts as we use mechanical tools. Our reasoning is too often desperately mechanical; spirit and life both baffle it. We are like the Jews—"How can these things be?" So we picture the anointed Son of Man, the great presentment of the eternal Christ of God, in some poor sort of way or another that shall make him easy for us to "understand." We "understand" him when we have made a machine-like model of him. They did that in a very neat and accurate-looking way, the best way possible at the time, at Chalcedon. They said to themselves (and truly) that he was God and Man. "How can these things be?" They made a model, and, as psychological science was not yet born, it was made quite simply a *thing* model. As a person (they had a better word for the purpose than our "person") he was God; but he had two natures, divine and human, and two wills, divine and human, united by his divine "person," as we have to say. There we have our model, plain enough, in a fashion that would suit stones or parts of a machine; but it does not suit God and man, now that we know

more of man. The science of mind has certainly done us the good service of showing us the latent materialism of such work as this.

Popularly, Christ Jesus is only God in masquerade, which is an easy conception, popularly. Therefore revulsion came. And we have among many other signs of it these two books, both beautiful, both arrestingly true in their different ways, giving us pictures of a true man, a man as he should be, up to a point. Beyond that point there is the complementary picture in the Fourth Gospel of a man in whom the Word of God is fully manifest, a man whose manhood is taken into God and permeated by God, one who shows us both man as he should be when he has passed that arresting point, and God as he is for man. That, too, not in a mechanistic model, but as very Life—the Eternal Christ in whom abides very Light and very Love. "How can these things be?"

Words are too poor, logic fails us, before the mystery of growing union between man and God, the mutual permeation and inherence of the human and the divine towards which and in which our nature strains. It is well to study the living fact. That may be seen and watched not only in the great Son, but in us who are his brethren. Jacob Boehme says that the cross

we must all take up and bear, if we would follow Jesus, is the cross of our unfulfilled nature. There we can see what the cross in the heart of God is, which he bears until we are fulfilled in him.

Mystery, yes; but a mystery that is spirit and life within ourselves. In our spirit and life the mystery is in part unveiled; for God in us, the Spirit of God indwelling us and becoming ourselves, is known in men's experience, where they do not shut him out. We must look into ourselves, and learn of our mystery. We must learn what it is to be as we are and stand where we stand, persons capable of meeting persons in the vital interpenetrating way, and having personal relations of mind and spirit that are very different from the relations between stones or plants, or even our most friendly beasts.

* * *

December 6th.—Bergson, whom even pursuit by fashion cannot stultify, made a striking declaration about the religious outcome of his three great books, which both his critics and his followers often forget. (I take the English rendering given in *Henri Bergson*, by Ruhe and Paul.) "Now the considerations set forth in

my *Essai sur les données immédiates* result in bringing to light the fact of freedom; those of *Matière et Mémoire* point directly, I hope, to the reality of spirit; those of *L'Évolution créatrice* exhibit Creation as a fact. From all this emerges clearly the idea of a God, Creator and free, the generator of both matter and life, whose work of creation is continued on the side of life by the evolution of species and the building up of human personalities. From all this emerges, consequently, a refutation of monism and pantheism in general."

He has a reputation to lose, this philosopher; and he marks for us a change in thought. It is possible now to confess the reality of spirit as candidly as we confess the reality of matter, and without apologies. Spirit has always been avowedly mysterious; matter, on the other hand, was supposed once to have no mystery about it. Now even the electrotonic theory of it reeks of mystery. What in the name of common sense are these electrons? They are not matter; yet matter is composed of them.

I look forward to a day (not far off, as I think) when matter will have come so near to spirit as to have lost all easy interpretation, even by the short-sighted men we call materialists. Spirit may then come into its own even for them, as

more real (I bear in mind Bradley's degrees of reality) and yet no more mysterious than matter.

As to God, Creator and free, and as to a creation crowned in personal life, an acknowledgment like this of Bergson's brings philosophic thought very near our Christian religion. Indeed we may well ask ourselves whether that thought is not carried further on its own congenial way, if it is taken to the very threshold of religion, which perhaps may lead to its completing by religion.

After all, if there is a God and if he has brought persons into being, there must be links between him and them. What are those links? And how far do they go? Do they stop short in some relation like that of an ingenious inventor with a set of puppets he has made for a puppet-show? Is that the relation we expect to find between God, Creator and free, and the personal beings who crown a world in which his potency, through millions of years of striving, has reached their eminence? I could not respect a God who fabricated at such cost and pains a puppet-show; I cannot respect any theory of him that makes him so ridiculous.

Besides, what is any person in relation to another person, as we know persons? What, in short, am I in my relation to any other person?

The odd thing, the striking thing, about our relation is that under certain circumstances it will enable him to give himself to me and me to give myself to him, in an harmonious interplay of conscious or unconscious give and take. As he and I are not machines, our knowing and feeling and acting are not produced like flour out of a flour-mill; they are our own selves, and when we show them, we show ourselves, when we communicate them, we communicate ourselves. We may not choose to share our knowing with each other, and the state of our minds and hearts; but if we do choose, we can. If we choose, he and I may in some degree become identical in aim and thought and feeling, and we may work together in real coöperation. But we cannot be forced into this harmony. If we do not choose to give ourselves, to communicate ourselves, no power in earth or heaven can make us. There is nothing necessary or compulsive about it.

So, when I hear that the striving of life has been directed towards emancipating live creatures from the bonds of material necessity, I do well to think of this natural everyday experience of ourselves. We need not give ourselves; we often don't; but we can. It is a great prerogative; and we may usefully take note of it

as a sign of our being persons and not playthings.

Very well. Then consider God, who, having brought into being persons, may reasonably be regarded as not less than personal, however much more, or infinitely more, he may be. Lotze says that perfect personality is in him only, and that we are only "pale copies." This, I suppose, means that Lotze observes our imperfection as persons. We are imperfectly personal as we are imperfectly free; we are probably very far from being finished. Personality in us seems a mere germ, though a germ of wonderful promise, like the promise of our imperfect freedom. But we are enabled by it to tell ourselves that if, when we choose, we can admit a fellow-creature into the surprising intimacy of a harmony in knowledge, in purpose and intention, in mind generally and in heart, we can in some measure admit into a like intimacy God, if he is willing to communicate himself to us. We may even go so far as to say that, whereas the imperfection of a fellow-creature (like our own imperfection) hinders harmony and mutual giving between him and us, the perfection of the personality in God, even if he is infinitely greater than personal, must further it. And we, as we learn to do his will, may come to hinder him less.

I am afraid we do not often think out these things. They may seem "theoretical"; I am sure they are not, that is, in the invidious sense of being useless. I am afraid too that we do not apply the lessons of our experience of each other to our relation with God; chiefly, no doubt, because our experience is not often of a character to point to God. We so rarely experience "the soul-enlarging mystery of the awakening of our mind and will to fuller life and fruitfulness" in human intercourse. Our experience of men so rarely shows what it might of the self-communicating life-giving intercourse of soul with soul; it is so often an affair of soul over against soul, and mind opposing mind. How should such experience enlighten us concerning God? How should it not darken our counsel about him, as well as our vision of him and our intercourse with him? How, in fact, can a man love God unless he loves his brother also? That is, how can a man touch, taste and enjoy God (as the mystics say) unless he touches, tastes and enjoys, so far as may be, his fellow-men? They are the school of personal intercourse in which he may be trained for God. If he and his fellow-men are growing, even only growing and that very slowly, into the harmony of personal self-communicating life which St. John pictures as

oneness among men such as is enjoyed by the Father and his divine Son, then God and they will be growing into that oneness too. "What life would'st thou lead?" Traherne asks. "Would'st thou serve God alone? God alone cannot be beloved. . . . He must be loved in all with an unlimited love, even in all His doings, in all His friends, in all His creatures. Everywhere in all things thou must meet His love. And this the Law of Nature commands. And it is thy glory that thou art fitted for it. . . . Thy nature urgeth it. For without loving thou art desolate, and by loving thou enjoyest. Yea, by loving thou expandest and enlargest thyself, and the more thou lovest, art the more glorious. . . . Which showeth the endless proneness of love to increase and never to decay. O my Soul, thou livest in all those whom thou lovest: and in them enjoyest all their treasures."

* * *

December 8th.—If God were to find his way into such a degree of intimacy with any man among us as would mean an identity of purpose and knowledge, of mind and heart, like that of lover and lover, or of an exalted friendship in generous coöperation, he would in some degree

have communicated himself as personal to the man as personal. There would be a degree of harmony and of real identity of aim, purpose, knowledge, love, between God and the man. The personality of the man would be happily invaded by God, whom he would willingly receive and make his own. God would be expressed by the man, so far as that man's manhood and desire then allowed. The man would not be destroyed or replaced, he would be in some degree fulfilled; God would not be essentially misrepresented, he would be truly if partially represented in terms of the man whom in part he had permeated by his spirit.

There is, I suppose, no grimmer skeleton in many people's theological cupboard than the problem of the place of one particular historical event in relation to the enduring truth of spirit and life—the place of Jesus of Nazareth in relation to the Christ of all humanity in heaven and on earth. Born in a little place, of a little nation, at a given date, "born of a woman," the "only-begotten Son of God," we say, came once to this little planet and walked about it a man among men. He had a childhood, he grew to maturity, he found a way to death; and death dealt with him as it deals with us. Men tell us

that it is incredible. Can we maintain that it is true ?

"Now are we the sons of God," we say, we ordinary men. The only begotten is our Elder Brother, and we are fellow-heirs with him, God though he be ; we too in the Spirit are begotten, though in the flesh we are made. Is there a contradiction here ? Or do we speak better than we know, from depths unreached by logic, depths of the spirit which has only permitted logic and will some day keep it in its place ?

"Sons"—what do we mean, what are we struggling to say, when we speak of ordinary men as Sons of God, and yet confess one man as the only begotten, the royally Anointed ? Words of analogical reasoning, these are ; symbols, too, thrown out as nets to entangle for a moment an immensity that eludes all effort to detain it. They are words appropriate only to a kinship that has visible beginning, to kindred linked in space, father juxtaposed by son, son following father.

Our kinship with God is of another order, because he transcends all orders. But we Christians should know the deep kinship of personal spirits, their permeation of each other by mutual love and an intuitive understanding in which each interweaves his own mystery with

the mystery of the other; and in this we should have some clue to our relation with God and be able to speak intelligently about it. Holding this clue, we learn that what we call Sonship in God must mean the capacity of receiving him into ourselves in personal union. We begin to see that we may know him as a divine will and character becoming our own human will and character. So God may both become visible in a man, and enable him to express the proper perfection of a man. All that is needed is that the way be clear of barriers set against his coming. The man then enters into personal possession of God as he enters into possession of himself in the fulfilment of that which he has in him to become. This, for Christians, is man's far-off goal. But it is an intelligible goal. We can maintain that it has value and pertinence in life.

Even now, even here and now, there are moments when God makes himself known to men, overcoming the poverty of those who entertain him. They are begotten anew in a little part of their unordered complexity of life. They are born again of the spirit of love that orders all things. But not wholly, for still they resist him, still he must strive with them; they are not conquered. Yet, clearly, if any man never opposed God, if he were always permeable to the

divine influx, he would indeed be manifestly God's Son, wholly his, living in his life, making him fully known in terms of man, as a man among men. The manifestation of God in the man would and must be local, temporary, in a place and at a stated time; God would be, as always, infinitely beyond it; but he would be really present there, he would be revealed in the man according to the measure of man. And that would be the emergence from the continuity of a living process of a supreme order of life; it would show the difference between the unbroken whole of a proper human perfection and the more or less of imperfection in other men. There God would make plain at last the way, the truth, and the life of man. There God, embracing finitude and growing in wisdom and stature, would become at last "manifest in the flesh" as a man whose kingdom should have no end. He would come among us seeking his own as man seeks man; endowed with the narrow but penetrating advantage of bodily approach, and a halting yet intelligible speech for the eternal Love and Reason. So he, the God ever striving in each one of us, knocking always at the door of every heart, would also draw near to us from without in a visible, intelligible sacrament, and by love eloquent in the actual

life of one man. In that sacrament, by a life of power brought to the door of sense, the secret of all hearts would be presented to all eyes and told in every tongue.

Has it ever been so? Was it indeed so in Palestine, a bare two thousand years ago, as Christians say? Is there evidence, witness in the life of men, in the life of Christian men?

This wonder is not to be known by any mere teaching—"The teaching leads to the pathway and to the journey. The vision is the affair of him who would see." It is a wonder the world has always desired and often foretold; it fills the longing soul with good things that imagination, in many a mythical shape, has depicted; but it must be seen to be believed. For there is a secret that hides these things from "the wise and prudent," who wish to see with intellectual eyes unfitted for such vision, before they make the venture of the heart which alone discovers it. It is a secret revealed to the babes who do not know how to blind their spirit's eyes, or check the impulse of the heart. Treasures of spirit and life cannot be grasped like truths of science; they must be received as indwelling power, lived and loved that they may be known. Only when Christ dwells in us do we know him; and then we know him as our life and the will

and love of God in us. "God has sprung up for us, out of the earth as it seems; yes, from the very heart of humanity."

Can we indeed make this living truth intelligible and not only intelligible but welcome, desired, sought after as men seek after treasure of the heart when the heart knows its treasure?

* * *

December 10th.—A man must live the life to know of the doctrine of the incarnate Word. But the Lord Jesus has his own magic and draws men by it. You will hear a hundred, a thousand, objections to God for one brought against him. You will hear him over and over again contrasted with God in God's disfavour. The beauty of his self-sacrificing life in Palestine, his piercing knowledge of men and his infinite compassion for them, his wisdom and the enduring if unattainable standard of conduct he set up; and finally that personal magic which across the centuries the Gospel portraits of him still exert—all these make him attractive to men as no other man has ever been. You have only to read *The Jesus of History* to see how that must be. And in the other presentment, which is all but history, *By an Unknown Disciple*, you will

see the same thing. There are many followers of Jesus who are doing his will and learning, no doubt, of his doctrine, because, so they say, they love him and admire him as "only a man." "Only a man" betrays them doubly, for what is a man unless he is capable of God? Besides, they mean too that Christ Jesus is of no higher order than they themselves, and differs from them only in degree as being better, more courageous, stronger, finer, more gracious and lovable. We cannot blame them for this, because until they see every man who really is a man as capable of God, yet often rejecting him, they cannot see how one who is filled with the fullness of God is of a supreme, an unique, order in the hierarchy of life. They cannot see, either, the greatness to which they themselves are summoned by their capacity for God.

Yet we all live by admiration and desire, and God comes to any who admire and will receive that which he is, truth, beauty, justice, love. Even if it is not a beauty in Jesus, or truth seen in him; even if we admire these only as ideals, apart from their realization in him or in any man who has ever walked the earth, if we earnestly seek after them because they are what they are, and in the true sense worship them, then we assuredly find God and are held fast by him.

It is not necessary that we should be able to know and recognize consciously just what we are doing in him or he is doing in us ; we may be of those who in great surprise will say " Lord, we never knew thee " ;—but he knows us, and our hearts will recognize where our knowledge failed to reach.

" When hast thou said
That only those who see, shall taste the living bread ? "

If I watch any man attracted by Jesus as " only a man," I smile to myself ; it is the attraction that counts, not the mistake. Heaven knows that when we reach some world of clearer light than this we shall find that in trying to express spirit and life in our poor thought and poorer language we have made mistakes quite bad enough to set beside any such as this, perhaps much worse.

* * *

December 16*th.*—We who call ourselves Christians of the Church have a mass of tradition that we believe to be worthy of high respect. We pass it by at our peril, proving ourselves not only half-hearted in allegiance or at least half-minded, but ignorant of the value and the claim of an experience far wider and far longer than

our own, which tradition may possibly embody. Nowadays, if we see the peril of the Church, we dare not pass it by. Great fault is being found with our traditions and with the use of them both by our official representatives in the Church and by us whom they represent. We are told, and we deserve to be told, that we accept them without examining them; and that we do not distinguish between the real experience of religious and spiritual truth and a loyal or idle acceptance of interpretations or of supposed facts only forced upon us or commended to us. People are everywhere saying this about us, and I don't wonder at them. We have certainly earned the reproach. It is full time for us to mend our ways.

For my part I have seen this for long. Circumstances within me and without have driven me to work towards a better understanding of our position and of the charges brought against us by our many and increasing opponents. I have tried to study the Christian tradition, to look at it from their side as well as from ours, to distinguish between that actual experience of our fellow-Christians which gives weight to the traditional *consensus*, and the mere assent to statements regarding facts or interpretations, by whatever authority they have been made or

through whatever influence they have been commended, which were not, are not, and cannot be matters of experience at all to those who have accepted them. I recognize the great value of this distinction; I have found and proved its value. "It is only the perfectly spontaneous agreement of spirit with spirit that lends value to a consensus. If it is the result of listlessness, or of imitativeness, or of governmental pressure, or of the fear of eternal damnation, it is worthless."

I have tried to see fairly the traditional statements about facts of history, such as those concerning the infancy of Christ Jesus, sometimes as though I were an early Christian, sometimes as I am now with much of intermediate living and "theologizing" open to my research; and I believe that I have learnt, in this fashion, a great deal that strengthens me in my faith, nothing that weakens me. I shall take now from my old diary and embody here some passages that are important to me, in which I described for myself my attitude then towards the tradition of the birth of Jesus. They are as correct in my eyes now as they were a dozen years ago, and they blend well with what I have to say to-day. No defence of the truth of the tradition that has been offered since that time has shaken me in the very least. On the contrary,

the defensive work has, to my mind, only aided the attack—which, I remember, is what has usually happened when divines have taken the field against physical and biological science, and well may happen when they pit themselves against the sciences of history and psychology and of the criticism of documents.

It is a good plan, I think, to carry oneself back in mind to the days and circumstances of the origin of a tradition and then try to follow its growth. I try to carry myself back into, say, the middle of the second century and then I ask myself what I should have thought of the newly recorded tradition of that time, if I had lived then and yet had my present prepossessions in science and philosophy. For instance, how should I have regarded the new matter added in the first and third Gospels to the earlier tradition (or in place of the earlier silence) concerning the birth and infancy of Christ? I am inclined to say that I should have thought much of it forced, uncalled for. I should almost certainly not have thought it a gain in the expression of the truth as it is in Jesus, the truth of himself, his person and his office. I might even have regretted it, considered it rather a hindrance than a help to the acceptance of that truth. I should very likely have failed to appreciate its poetic

truth and religious value. But I am sure that a different set of prepossessions would have brought me to a different opinion. If I had been a child of my time and place and of the current knowledge, I should have thought the new historical details and the inferences drawn from them confirmed by my faith, and I should not have questioned their truth of fact. I should probably have used them in an unconscious circle of argument to defend my faith; should have expected them at least to prepare a way for its reception by other men.

At an earlier date, and as a Jew among Jews, I should have had at first no doubt that Jesus was the son of Joseph the carpenter; I should have thought of him as his neighbours thought. I should have spoken of his family, of his brothers and sisters, of his father and his mother. When I had become his follower and learnt to believe in him as the Messianic Son of David, the genealogies given in the Gospels would have strengthened my belief. There, I would have said, is his descent in the royal line; he is a king's son as well as a carpenter's; God "shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever."

It is amazing to us now that those artificial

compilations could ever have carried conviction; but the Hebrew Scriptures afford parallels enough to show that Hebrew criticism was not as ours. There are two genealogies of Benjamin, two of Judah, three of Caleb; they troubled no one. Teaching, inferences, meanings, count for such minds to the obscuring of all scientific questions as to fact; they count in the same way for such minds now, if they have escaped the discipline of criticism and the modern habit of fidelity to truth of fact.

A little later, if I had been subject to new influences, I might have added with my own hand those significant words "*as was supposed*" with which St. Luke begins his tree of descent from Joseph to "Adam which was the Son of God." True to the manner of my age, I might not have noticed that I had made that tree fruitless of its former advantage, and had set a mark upon it that would tell the tale of its origin to more observant generations, like the account given of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, because it was the place that befitted a son of David. I should then have had a new purpose to serve and a new genealogical descent to prove, not from David.

The divine Son needed no earthly father; rather, he could have had none other than the

Power of the Highest. And was there not a prophecy? (I should have had no difficulty in reading "virgin" into that prophecy, where the text gave a different word. Literary fidelity was not of that age any more than scientific fidelity.) The tradition would thus grow with my growth, step by step, stage by stage—as it grew. In later generations it would naturally follow the same course—as it has. The result we see.

But if in the early days, and still as a man of that time, I had been a follower of St. Paul, I should have been quite consistent with my teacher if I had cared for none of these things. The truth as it is in Jesus would have seemed independent of them; as it does to me now. I might have written, like Paul, letters to the Churches of which he had care, and never so much as spoken of those affairs of descent and birth. Christ crucified, Christ risen from the dead, would have been enough of history for me, in whom Christ lived and proved himself life-giving, the heavenly and eternal Son, though manifest in the flesh and like ordinary men "born of a woman." I should have thought, probably, that any account of his being born of a virgin who was "found with child of the Holy Ghost" was likely to be incorrect, seeing that the heavenly Son existed before the world and

merely assumed the flesh. He had not arisen as something new when Mary became with child. "Entre la notion du logos préexistent qui s'incarne dans un homme, qui s'impose une telle tache sachant et voulant ce qu'il fait, et la notion de la conception à jour fixe d'un être nouveau n'acquérant une personnalité distincte qu'au moment de son entrée dans la vie humaine, il n'y a pas de commune mesure."

Now, as I look back on the growth of the tradition, I see one set of prepossessions which worked towards determining, furthering, reconciling or ignoring this inconsistency, and finally consolidating it. And behind its persistence and its change I see along the later generations of Christians the constant influence of certain philosophical doctrines concerning matter, the impurity of nature, and the stain of sin and of its guilt upon the processes of nature. I see the increasing exaltation of virginity as a means of escape from the contamination of the flesh. I see a warmer welcome given to any means by which the imaginary heritage of the *macula* of sin could be cut off from our Lord. The sanctification of Mary from the moment of conception, by a special act of the Holy Ghost, was one means adopted to set that heritage still further back from Jesus; and the tradition of the

miraculous manner of his birth, passed over by St. Paul and in the second and fourth Gospels, and added in the first and third (with imperfect adjustment), found everywhere a welcome which was the more cordial and unquestioning because a virgin birth seemed the most fitting, as well as the accepted, means by which the Lord could escape the stigma set upon all sons of sinful man. How (Christians have said during these long years and until lately with more and more emphasis) shall the second Adam be pure, let his life be as it may, if the first Adam have indeed set that seal of guilt upon him? Their prepossessions demanded a break in the succession; and they found what they sought, or made it.

Therefore they never found what good critics by their disinterested carefulness are showing us now in these documents of ours. They never found the sequence of ideas and notions as they grew round about experience and the fitting of interpretation to desire in regard to these matters. We are like our fathers; but we are learning now a lesson they could not learn. We are learning the value of disinterestedness in criticism. It is a lesson taught us by new science and new methods. Men could not learn it before. The care of St. Luke was not as ours may be now; it was only care in such a manner

and by such methods as were less carefully used by other and less careful men of his time. He had not reached "that stage of veneration for fact at which a historian accepts on evidence a tale which conflicts with cherished beliefs and rejects for want of evidence a tale which has an acceptable moral." He considered little enough the agreement of account with fact or of one fact with another; edification stood with him above all; the spirit ruled, sometimes misruled, the letter. His attention was guided by penetrating insight into what really mattered for his purpose. Now truth of fact seems to be all that matters for us. And there are times when we miss the spirit in an idolatry of fact. We need to learn from men like St. Luke as well as from the stricter historians of our own times.

So, I think, do those who find fault with an uncritical acceptance, and miss altogether the religious value in St. Luke's beautiful legend of the birth of Jesus—the truly religious value both his and St. Matthew's had for Christians in past days, and still have, whether taken as accounts of historic fact or not. For us who see them as religious poetry of different poetic ranks, they have the same religious value. "Poetry is a more philosophic thing than history and of a higher seriousness." We can see in the poetry

of St. Luke the high seriousness of religious fact; and, indeed, because his poetry exceeds St. Matthew's, so does his value for us. What does it matter to us that the Magnificat has its setting in poetic legend, once we have seen its depths of penetration into eternal truth and religious experience?

Let us tell those men who have not been able to acquire historic truth without losing truth of spirit and life, of poetry and religion, how wrong we have been in our uncritical days and how right they are, that they may come to see how right we are and how wrong they have been. Let us remind both them and ourselves, too, that, as William James says in words I try never to forget, "a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule." Every man of us needs that lesson, and not least those who do not acknowledge Christian kinds of truth.

Dr. Percy Gardner says that the legendary view of the birth of our Lord "is absolutely doomed by the progress of historical research." It is like "a spar," he goes on, "which has been riddled with shot, and the wisest as well as the most honest plan is to try to rid the ship of its

weight?" He adds that "the tenet is not, either from the historical or the logical point of view, the basis of the worship of the divine Son, but rather of the worship of the Virgin Mother." This is doubtless true, and Christendom must face it; but we may keep both the religious value of the historical fact and the poetic and mystical significance of the Blessed Mother of the Lord Christ, if we will. She remains his Mother; and all the wonders of life upon earth may be seen as not only symbolized but summed up in the picture of those two.

There is one other great consequence to be faced. Belief in an infallible Church must become the privilege of those who submit to an infallible Pope. There will be no place for infallibility except in Rome. And that brings other Christians into line with candid truth-seekers everywhere, and should bring these to know their fellowship with us.

* * * .

December 17th.—I find I have more to say about the Christian tradition of the birth of Christ Jesus, or rather I have valuable stuff to note down that is not mine and is out of most people's reach.

An Italian review, *Il Rinnovamento*, was published during the brief spring-time of Roman Catholic Modernism, when the movement was still guided by careful hands and before hope of reform through aid from the reigning powers of the Church had faded away.

The Papal power is now the only autocracy left to represent a once widely approved and widely useful principle of government; but, when the Roman Catholic Modernists were appealing to it, it seemed a good deal more securely autocratic and also more capable of reform than it seems now. We cannot now easily believe that a fashion of rule which all the rest of the world has abandoned can persist there unchanged, if it admits of reform at all in any important matter. Its existence must depend, we think, on the maintenance of an august immobility and a self-guarding isolation. As an autocracy it may continue to exist, as it grew up, under the shadow of the great name of Imperial Rome—not else. If it reforms, it must be changed out of all recognition.

Il Rinnovamento died, crushed by autocracy; but I give here some extracts which I, at least, would not willingly let die with it. They are translated from the original Italian.

"The earliest Gospel began with the preach-

ing of the Baptist, and with the baptism of Jesus. This baptism is referred to in Mark i. 1, as 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'; in John xv. 27, where Jesus at the Last Supper says to His disciples—'Ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning'; in Acts i. 21, 22, where Peter proposes that the disciples should choose in the place of Judas one 'of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John'; and in Acts x. 37, 38, and xiii. 24, 25, where Peter and Paul respectively refer to the same point of departure. Neither Mark nor Matthew, nor Luke (if we omit their prologues), nor St. Paul in his letters, nor the Johannine writers, ever allude to any event in the earthly life of Jesus before His baptism. . . .

"There is still a very general impression that to abandon the precise historical reality of either of the beautiful stories in these prologues means the necessary abandonment of every other account in the Gospel—from the baptism of Jesus to His parabolic teaching, and His Agony and Death upon the Cross. 'All or nothing.' But the student knows very well that it is not so; since not only must the historical reality

of these scenes of the public life and of the Passion be kept, but it cannot be kept on the basis of principles which will also preserve intact the narratives of the Infancy. The historian who should attempt to defend both series of narratives on valid principles would only end by destroying both. Nor will such discrimination take from the prologues all truth and validity. They can and must remain as pictures vaguely, spiritually true, like the details and combinations, which have no historical basis, in a fresco of Fra Angelico's.

"Then there is the grave difficulty that a Christian and Catholic doctrine, that of the conception and virgin birth of Our Lord, seems to be menaced by such a treatment of the prologues. On this delicate point we can only offer the following considerations:

"(1) The textual and historical proofs of this doctrine, understood in the ordinary physical sense, are certainly weak, and at times contrary to the doctrine itself. There is no trace of it in Mark, in the epistles of St. Paul, nor in the Johannine writings. In fact Mark contains passages which are extremely difficult to conciliate with the fact inculcated by the doctrine. And the earliest texts of Matthew's genealogy, as also the earliest elements in St. Luke's

narrative of the infancy, suppose a typically human conception and birth. So that if we will, or must, retain the doctrine as affirming a real physical fact, the documents force us to admit that the immediate companions of Jesus and St. Paul lived and died without apparently being aware of the fact itself; and that among the redactors of the three synoptic gospels (between the years 68 and 95 A.D. about), the first, Mark, offers us only documents which assume the contrary, while the later two (Matthew and Luke) give us the earlier doctrine together with the later developments.

"(2) The belief in the virgin birth of Our Lord and the faith in His divinity are certainly largely aided the one by the other; and the first, in certain times among certain peoples, may also have been strictly necessary (and may for some time continue to be so) for the preservation of the last. But the two beliefs are not, objectively, in a necessary connexion. Our Lord might have been conceived and born miraculously and yet still be merely man; Our Lord might be all that the doctrine of His divinity strives to express and yet be conceived and born, with regard to the merely physical details of the facts, in the same manner as any other entirely human man."

It is an open secret that the writer of these words, who signs them only "H," is a devout and learned Roman Catholic scholar, whom to know is to revere. I set them down here as a monument of fearless faith. Everywhere there are Christians who are afraid to face truth of history lest it drive out truth of religious faith. They are afraid to confess that God has chosen the weak things of the world to reveal himself; that he has taken true man, natural man, up into himself in true personal union by a way other than that which has so long seemed in their eyes the one way seemly for him in his magnificence. So they say that when we accept the verdict of critical historians, and lift the veil that devotion has thrown over history, we are denying the incarnation of God in man. It is not true: we are rather affirming it with a new fullness and a new emphasis. For us there is nothing of man except his sin that is not taken up by God in our Lord Jesus Christ. All human heritage, all the common conditions of human life, are become his. Not only has the manner of our conscious life upon earth become God's, but our history to the remotest sources, our birth as well as our breeding, our links with all the life of our fathers before us, everything that is ours and ourselves. Thus the incarnation of

God becomes perfect in its wholeness. Jesus, "born of a woman, born under the law," is the bearer of all the generations of man and carries them to God. In him all processes of life are sanctified, made common to God and man in harmonious union.

It is we who stain those processes, each of us for himself. We stamp them in ourselves with the mark of our personal guilt. But even we cannot convey guilt to nature. "Not that which goeth into a man" defiles him. Flesh and blood are incapable of conveying the guilt of personal evil, although each one of us can mar our nature by wilful sin, even transmit it injured and defaced—a worse condition than before for the growth of spiritual life. The spirit of man and the natural process by which man is born are both capable of being raised into free relation with the life of God, as they are capable of being degraded in slavery to the lowest of man's natural needs. From God they came, even those natural needs; and to him they may return, by the beloved Son in whom he is well pleased, in whom his power is complete. He makes in his own image that which we often mar in ours; he makes again that which we have marred. And if the birth of our Saviour was as our own birth, he took from the beginning all

that is ours, to carry it by the power of the life of God into the proper perfection of man. In him we see, too, that even man's highest order of life, his proper perfection, is always dependent for its endurance on his enduring conformity to the will of God. The interpenetration and identity of persons remain, even in the perfection of the incarnate Christ, a matter of free acceptance and self-giving. So our Lord says to us that if we keep his commandments we shall "abide" in his love; "even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

* * *

Christmas Day.—"A blue-black sky ablaze with stars for His glory, a fresh white robe for stained and tired earth; so we went to Bethlehem in the rare stillness of the early morning. The Church, having no stars, had lighted candles; and we poor sinful men having no white robes of our own had craved them of the Great King at her hands.

"And so in the stillness, with tapers within and stars alight without, with a white-clad earth, and souls forgiven, the Christ-Child came to those who looked for His appearing."

"To those who looked." *Ask and ye shall*

receive ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you. They call it expectant attention nowadays—this attitude of those who wait on the Lord and meet him according to his promise. And sometimes they call him a product of that attention and expectancy. Is it so, or not? The problem is crucial; it is the problem of spirit and life; it is the problem of the true way of mankind. My experience, like that of a multitude of men, proves incontestably to me, as theirs proves to each one of those men, that when we look for the appearing of the Christ-Child in our lives—the one place where he may reasonably be sought—he comes, he is found. That is to say, each finds in his life a new spirit; a spirit not himself and yet becoming himself in impulse, in action; a Spirit transforming him into its likeness; the Spirit he looks for and worships in his Christmas adoration of the Lord. This Spirit is powerful in our lives; it enables us to do that which we have vainly tried to do, it sets far from us evils we have desired to cast off and seen no way to cast off. We are astonished by ourselves, for we are new to ourselves. These are marvels that happen in the mysterious operation of Spirit in spirit; and our lives bear them witness, our experience of them cannot be gainsaid. Christ comes, we say;

Christ lives in us, we say. It is faith ; but it is also knowledge. It is life and it is truth.

What kind of knowledge ? What kind of truth ? A man may tell me that I talk nonsense about the Christ-Child. " My good Sir," he may say, " even if Christ is alive at all, he is certainly not a child. He was once a child—that I must allow—but as a child he could have no influence over you, to speak of, even if you had been in Bethlehem (where he was *not* born) nineteen hundred and twenty-seven years ago (your chronology, you know, is wrong). And to talk of his coming now, in 1919, is sheer nonsense, and superstitious nonsense, at that. I suppose your belief is connected with the mediæval doctrine of transubstantiation—but how any sane and sensible man "—and so forth.

It is obvious that this kind of enquirer is seeking another kind of truth than that which I seek, than that which I sought and found when I " went to Bethlehem in the rare stillness of the early morning." I went in search of a truth of spirit and life coming with power, proving itself in the springs of action—a truth of inner *experience*, yet externally fruitful. He quarrels with me because he wants a truth of *experiment* after the manner of science, and of

knowledge which any normal man can discover by his five senses and a machine-maker's use of his mind. His truth will no doubt have a value in life; but it will be without force for him in the spiritual conduct of life, without fruit of the spirit's ideal. It may be historical truth, brute fact, or scientific fact (a very different thing), but it does not come to him with spiritual power.

The truth I seek, on the other hand, is not spiritually ineffective. There are men, obviously, who cannot find it where I find it, many who seem not even to know how to begin to look for it. Yet they are often men who would certainly find a brute fact and, after a little training, a scientific fact, without difficulty. The discovery of my truth seems to be outside their range, at least as they are now. There are then different kinds of truth, and of facts. The finding of spiritually effective truth is a matter of the whole man—a vital process not unlike the process by which a man discovers and brings forth either the real apprehension of a poem or a poem itself. It is like what we call a work of genius; it is both apprehensive and creative; in fact it is work due to genius of the creative spiritual energy of personal life. And the language in which this kind of truth has to be expressed is,

like all the language of genius, spiritually not scientifically symbolic; it is not positive, it is sacramental, and is truly understood only by those in whom truth itself grows to be a living power of continued truth-seeking.

I know, as well as my friend knows, that there is no child visible to sense in that church; yet I worship the Christ-Child there. I know, better than he knows, that the man who, in accepting the doctrine of transubstantiation, accepts a pseudo-explanation of that which cannot be explained, does not imagine any such thing; yet the Christ-Child comes, perhaps, to both him and me. The division between us and our critic lies deep; it is the division between a kind of truth set apart from fullness of personal life and intercommunion of persons, and a kind of truth to be found only in glad acceptance of life communicated from that which reaches to the heavens and embraces the worlds.

* * *

December 30th.—I have found my diary of ten years ago saying about these great matters what I would say now, and I have both added to it and quoted from it. All the changes and chances of those years have not changed, though

they have, I think, expanded, my thought and belief in regard to those matters. This is as it should be. There should be a central core of truth, a real apprehending of the relation between God and man, which abides in the mind to test and, it may be, to incorporate and harmonize all else that comes.

People talk nowadays of an acid test; they are thinking, I suppose, of *aqua regia*, the test proving gold. This that I speak of is the royal test, the *aqua regia*, which the Christian has always to his hand. Test or core—two figures: we must always speak in figure, or by symbol or of sacrament, when we speak of spirit and life. "The words that I speak unto you," St. John hears Jesus say, "they are spirit and they are life." But they were ordinary words about bread and flesh and blood, which yet were figures the Jews could not understand, so St. John said. Bread and flesh and blood are indeed more than figures; they are symbols conveying that which they symbolize; they are sacraments. And St. John has the sacramental principle of life in his core of thought and of belief. That is his royal test. He applies it to history and dissolves away the dross that accumulates around the gold of spiritual truth; and then of that gold he makes glories for his

Lord, the sacramental Christ. Mystic and philosopher, he sees through the body of flesh and blood to inherent and eternal Spirit and Life, and proclaims the glory of God and man made manifest. The Word is become flesh and dwells among us.

Not at first were the followers of Jesus able to see him as manifesting the divine Reason and Speech, the Word that was "in the beginning," and "was with God" and "was God." Not at first; only after long years of opening vision and a revealing and confirming experience. Even then there was but one here or there endowed with the graces that bring such vision and allow experience to reveal such treasure. "May God us keep," says Blake, "From single vision and Newton's sleep!" Single vision does not mean the single eye of the Gospels; it means a vision in which a man sees only the outsides of things—flesh and blood as no more than flesh and blood—and is blind to spirit and life. It means eyes for which the world is not sacramental, has no depths and no mysteries, only a surface with puzzles on it. It means for Newton or any other man a sleep in which realities are travestied by dreams which make the problems of life seem superficial at the expense of their depth of fact.

The philosopher's dreams are different, yet he is often to his loss immersed in them. Not always; sometimes he also has Blake's "fourfold vision"; like St. John who, though he had learnt from philosophy about the Word who is the Wisdom, the Reason, and the Speech of God, was far more mystic than philosopher.

I consider him, this man who had risen to such heights of vision and thought. I consider his history, his genesis, where he came from like us all, and what, unlike us, he became. His remotest forefathers were specks of living jelly, and he himself began as they had been. Through long uncounted ages the primitive jelly increased and multiplied and grew, and was formed into one plastic, unstable creature after another, until the great all-but-men brought forth true men. His nearer forefathers, not so very long ago, were wild men, fighting and scheming to maintain bare life. Through all that history and its æons life was a rising and spreading tide of ever new creations, passing rarely and here or there from one order to another and a higher, until in its main current the great ascent from solitary cell to man, *homo sapiens*, was complete. And now, for every man, life makes that same ascent, but swiftly. Now too it rises from the cell to man; but the process that occupied

millions of years is accomplished in nine months. What happens in those months condenses the tale of those millions of years. And then we have a descendant of wild fighting men, whose energies were concentrated on bare living, telling us of the Word that becomes flesh and dwells among us.

What must we think and say about the world of things and men and their history in the light cast on it by this man ? Yet more, what must we say about that world in the light cast by him whom this man saw in glory, in fullness of light and of power of life, in love grown perfect and showing therefore the perfection of God ? What can we say and think of all this ?

The world is or may be changed for us ; it has become or it may become sacramental. We share the fourfold vision, or we may share it if we do not darken the uncomprehended light within us. Our scientific knowledge of man passes upward into a knowledge of incarnation ; we see all men as sacraments, as flesh and blood that are outward signs of spirit and life. We see them called to manifest God. That is what the fourfold vision brings. Have I really that vision ? Or do I only register in myself words about it as possessed by some other men ? Is it, after all, one of Blake's freakish fancies ? O

does it stand open to every one of us, to me also? That is a question to be faced. Are we able to see into our own depths and know that we possess it? Learning from the Fourth Gospel picture of Jesus, do we learn of ourselves? I am assured that if we do learn from that picture we certainly learn of ourselves: St. John, at all events, wrote to that end.

* * *

January 10*th*.—St. John is inspired, we say: what do we mean by inspiration? First, let me look at the men whom we commonly call inspired. Dante and Shakespeare, not Pope; Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Chopin, not Verdi, nor Gounod; Turner, Puvis de Chavannes, Giotto, Rodin, Leonardo; not Teniers, Meissonier, nor Leighton, with all their skill. I can picture to myself a giant standing at the summit of human intelligence and power of brain, knowing all things that can be known in the intellectual way, master of all processes in that domain; with a hand and eye that range from one field to another, and bring all into grasp and focus at his will. I can picture this Colossus of mind bestriding the world, and feel no inclination to call him inspired. Not that way lies the

advance of spirit; not with such an eye or such a hand does a man reach the deep things of life, spiritual beauty and truth, holiness, love. Not that way does he find God, beneath the garment of God he knows and may describe so well.

Evidently I demand of the inspired man that he shall penetrate beyond the look and skilful management of things. Somehow or other he must mingle with, interpenetrate, permeate, the mysterious heart of the world; he must touch and handle its inner reality. I ask of him that he shall admit within himself, and give forth to us, what is incapable of full expression by material means or by logic and language; and yet is able to stir in other men a response, a creative movement, in which they may attain to contact with that which was his charge. This may be beauty, holiness, love, wisdom, truth; it may, in fact, be anything we are not afraid to say God is: but it is not discovered in mere knowledge, nor by mere skill, however great. It is even to a considerable extent independent of knowledge and skill, at least in any high degree. Inaccuracy, clumsiness, ignorance of a thousand relevant facts, will not arrest inspiration, nor altogether check its influence. "God has chosen the weak things," the things of humility. It seems that not rarely there exists a kind of

strength which hinders, because it intoxicates, because it fixes attention, and above all because it ministers to pride and self-complacency. The spirit and the temper of the child are conditions of all high inspiration—humility, the desire to learn, faith and its venture, a hope neither failure nor reasoning can blight, a vision defying the boundaries of sense and thought. And with this temper, this spirit, true strength coincides—the strength, I suppose, made perfect in that divine weakness and irresistible power which is at once humility and the art of seeing things as they are.

We are beginning to recognize these things. A new mind about inspiration is growing among us. We are abandoning the conduit theory which some of us applied only to the writers of the Bible; and others, for the most part, to almost anybody else. We are beginning to see that a man must have certain powers and qualities, must offer certain conditions and remain under them, in order that he may be subject to inspiration. We see, too, that what he gives us is always himself raised to new heights of power, intensified in quality. He owns that which he bestows; he does not merely pass it on. He colours it, shapes it, signs it with his ineffaceable signature; it is his, unique like himself, unique precisely as he is himself unique.

The psychologists, some of them, speak of "an uprush of the subconscious" in the inspired man —in the man of genius in art, religion, life. I had rather (in the good company of Dr. Percy Gardner) call it "an inrush of the superconscious." It carries a man beyond his own mark, puts into his hands that which he cannot wholly grasp, sends him with a message he does not fully understand. It rouses in him, in fact, by means of hidden senses of the spirit, an intuitive perception with which he reaches out into the continuous life of God around him everywhere. He does indeed build better than he knows, speak more truly than he sees, supply needs of which he is unaware. And in this he is rectifying the balance of human faculty and power, developing within himself that gift of God we others have so little used, so heavily overlaid with weight of other gifts.

The inspired man touches within himself, and without, the inner secrets of life—those secrets which the rationalizing intellect must always ignore. His peculiar process has in it something of dream, of reverie, which fortifies reflexion, and guides his constructive work. He develops for a higher use the magical endowment of those creatures who foresee that which no such creature has seen, or will ever see. Like

them, but reaching far beyond them, he *knows* by an operation that is not mere reasoning. He embraces within his effective use, and brings to view powers latent or crushed out in most of us. He is not more than man; but he is more of man than ordinary men are.

Yet he is as fallible as any man in certain ways and matters. Physical or scientific facts, facts of common sense, are not guaranteed to him by his wisdom or his truth. Historic facts are not revealed to him, nor does he escape the habits and conditions of his time and place, of his people, of his ordinary knowledge, even of his prejudice and fancy. He remains man although he touches God and that truth of men which is yet to come.

Such a man wrote the Fourth Gospel. He is akin with all the artists; he creates in his revelation, rather than records; he shows us truth that lives and will always live, let history and science say what they may and must against his history and science.

* * *

January 15th.—The inspired man is an artist; that is, a creative interpreter. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is painted as a great artist paints a portrait. Not that which any man of intelli-

gence may see is there, but that which one sees who enters into the inner meaning and pierces the sacramental veil that both hides and declares it. So when we read the discourses of Jesus we are reading of this inner meaning; they are the strokes of the great artist's brush. Like the prophets before him, who prefaced their message of interpretation with "Thus saith the Lord," he says, "Jesus said" that which he saw Jesus meant—that which the Divine Word meant. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" are words in which he hears speaking to him his own eternal way, the eternal truth his heart knows, the eternal life that is the eternal Christ living in him. "Because I live, ye shall live also"—this he knows from his own living. "If a man love me, he will keep my word"—this he knows from his own loving.

So it goes on; this Evangelist, in those discourses, interprets Jesus Christ as no other Evangelist had interpreted him. And it is the same with the dramatized parables ("miracle-symbols," Baron von Hügel calls them) of earlier chapters—the marriage feast, the raising of Lazarus, the woman at the well. They are symbols or parables of the eternal life-giver and life-restorer, and of the light enlightening every

man that comes into the world. Years of reflexion and of piercing insight and sanctified life have given this great seer the artistic rights of the fourfold vision. With a master's hand he paints for us the portrait of a true Man who is wholly one with God, a Man whom he hears declaring justly that "all things whatsoever the Father hath" are his, and whom he hears praying that all men who follow him may be one with each other as he and his Father are one, and so be one with the Father and himself.

If I did not believe that from the world of eternal life, which is the heart and sustenance of our world, Spirit comes to meet spirits and to inspire spirits; if I did not believe that men can, and that some do, "see God with the eyes of God" I should not dare to accept this portrait of the Lord as the eternal Christ, the Word of God manifest in and as and through a Man. I should see Jesus as the Unknown Disciple sees him, or as a Jesus only of a certain history in Palestine. But I do believe these things, and St. John, as a witness to the inner meaning of the Lord, and to the Christ supremely manifest in him, comes to me as a faithful witness. His witness is borne out in every Christian who is Christian indeed. Every such man "hath the

witness in himself." And so has every man "that cometh into the world," when he follows the divine light he sees. We who are Christians know that, and we should make more of it before the world.

* * *

January 20th.—I have been compiling lately a book, the materials of which have waited to be used for some three hundred years. I call it *The Confessions of Jacob Boehme.* It is to be published in the spring of this year, long before my diary will have reached a printer. Boehme is a great man and travelled faithfully the only way for great or little men who are fulfilling human destiny. I cannot think why it was left to me to extract from the mass of his writings—all precious in their own fashion, no doubt—the gold of his self-recorded personal life in God. But so it is. And I find him fit to quote as a Christian witness beside St. John. "The Word," he says, "has opened itself everywhere, in every man's light of life, and there is wanting only this, that the soul-spirit give itself up thereto. In that soul-spirit God is born." . . . "Understand it right: God has longed to become flesh and blood; and although the clear Deity continues Spirit, yet it is become the Spirit and

Life of flesh and works in the flesh. So we say that when we with our imagination [and by imagination he means what Blake means by it] enter into God, and wholly give ourselves up to him, we enter into God's flesh and blood and live in God. . . . Thus now to us the birth and incarnation of Christ is a joyful and very weighty matter."

Not a mere occurrence once in history—this birth and incarnation; but an eternal fact of life recurrent in time, and everywhere in time. This every mystic knows, and every man who in any degree "sees God with the eyes of God." You have only to hunger and thirst after truth and beauty and justice (which our books call righteousness) to make that sublime discovery of God dwelling in man. *Only*, I say; but just there is the proving-point of true religion. If you hunger and thirst, passionately desire, that trinity, or even no more than justice and truth or justice and beauty (there must be justice), you find God meeting your desire and feeding you with himself. "In that soul-spirit God is born"; for it is yielding itself to God who longs always to give himself. He bears our sorrows and our sins in bearing our nature as his Cross and us in his heart. And he comes in the measure of men's desires, for their desires are

effectual prayers and open or close the door between them and him.

Jacob Boehme knows this well. It was he who taught William Law to write *The Spirit of Prayer* and *The Spirit of Love*, and shake the dust of *A Serious Call* from his feet. Yet he made many intellectual mistakes. In places he is almost unreadable, with his vicious philology, and his alchemical jargon. But in mistakes and ignorance he shares the lot of all men, even of our greatest seers and saints and prophets. And of late we have learnt to estimate this failing more justly than we did before. In learning new things about the human mind we have learnt to carry far the critical distinction between truth of spirit and life, and truth of historical or scientific fact. We have therefore learnt at last to understand better the intellectual errors of saints and prophets and seers. Even the Man wholly possessed by God, a Man different in order from all the saints, must, if he were truly man, reflect, conceive and picture like other men. He must be of a people, a time, a place; he must grow in wisdom as in stature; and he too must share many of the difficulties of all men, and find himself bound by many of their conditions. Like them he must see, as well as express, in pictures and in words, truth of spirit and life,

truth beyond the compass of all pictures and all words. Even that Man who is fully God, the Man in whom God has become expressed as man, must embody in terms of time by the earth's measures and of space projected and understood in the human intellectual way the truth of man's relation to God. His language and mental pictures may well be as far from historical or scientific validity as any other man's, as far from superficial accuracy as any poet's, as far from photographic representation as those pictures of him that have been seen in vision by his saints, as that picture of him given by St. John.

It is said that he himself made the mistake his followers certainly made about the "second coming." That may be so. Yet it must have been he who said "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you." No believer in an immediate second coming could have written those words unless Jesus had spoken them. But the very vividness of his intuition, the keenness of his spiritual insight, the immediacy of his real knowledge, his perfect union with God, and the poignant agony of his love for men, would be likely to quicken and foreshorten time for him,

so that he would almost see with bodily eyes the consummation of that kingdom—" the glory of the sum of things " immanent already in the present chaos, and keeping pace with the urgency of his desire for its coming, hastening to make good the word of the prophets which was ringing in his ears. And this would be no mistake such as his followers made. It would be the stress of a vision beyond their vision breaking in upon the conditions of a human mind.

Even for mere saints—it is of their nearness to heavenly things—the glory of God, the love of God, the judgements and demands of God, are here and now; they are present, active; they are ready for men to see and hear, if men would but open their eyes and listen to the universal message. So they think; and sometimes they are surprised that any man escapes the revelation so plain to them, that any man fails to see through the tenuous veil of flesh the light which for them overpowers all the fictions of a world of flesh. They are not surprised that heaven is close at hand, nor that they can see it here as Boehme did; they wonder that any man is blind to it, that every man does not hear the voice of God above all other sounds. And often they have their impatience, the translation of their longing and their love. They would hasten

the kingdom, tear down the veil, compel men to listen and look. They would use the violence of love, the onslaught of self-sacrifice, against those walls set between earth and heaven which divide men from their own good and their salvation. "The kingdom of heaven *suffereth* violence," they declare; and by the condescension of divine love, "the violent" may "take it by force." Therefore they would storm heaven for love of the brethren, as their Master did when he laid down his life—as he had lived—to bring the kingdom of heaven among men upon earth, that kingdom which was "not of this world."

This is of the psychology of the saints. Their intellect, too, springs from the same root as our own; their minds have been schooled like ours. No man escapes the consequences of the birth and breeding of human intellect. Even God, permeating the life of a man without any hindrance by his self-will, even God thus revealing himself to the utmost of humanity, must be limited by the conditions of the man. Just as he must be in one shape of body, not in all; belong to one race, use one language, have one religion; so he must have one knowledge. And one knowledge means some ignorance, simply because it is finite. It leaves room for mistake

according to the fashion of a man's intellect, mistake due to the genesis of intellect, and to the influence of social inheritance, tradition, teaching, upon the individual mind. If Jesus could be tired, could be hungry and thirsty, in his body, so he could be subject to natural limitations in his intellectual process. "Why," says Tyrrell, "if God did not disdain the rôle of a poor man and a tempted man, should he disdain that of an ignorant man, wherein to reveal the Spirit victorious over the very commonest human limitations? It is not from the human mind that he *had*, but from the divine Spirit that he *was*, that man has drawn strength to conquer ignorance and weakness, energy to fight against darkness and wickedness, however costly, however interminable the conflict."

We may say, then, that although Jesus purified and spiritualized the Jewish hope of the coming of the kingdom on earth, as he purified and spiritualized everything he touched, and therefore did not share in their fashion the error of his disciples about it, yet, like them, he was ignorant of times and seasons; and so, having a power of vision in spiritual things far exceeding theirs, he would not only strain his own power of interpreting his vision for them, but strain even more their understanding of him. It is not

difficult to see how their mistake arose—unless we forget that their Master was true man. It is possible that he really did share their mistake, but this would in no way make him less certainly true God in man. But on the other hand we must never forget that the Gospel accounts of him were written by men who necessarily saw him through a veil of their own prepossessions and dominant beliefs.

* * *

January 30th.—I bear in mind that the Good News for which every man seeks is news of more life. More life means growing happiness and the witness of true joy; and happiness is plainly the desire of the heart, and even of the senses and the mind, in all men. I see men who are looking for it in the hells they build about them; I see them, I cannot help seeing them, hungering for more life, yet going, apparently, straight towards the second death. And when they despair of happiness I find that they despair, too, of the poor life they have and seem to be losing. An animal may be content with the life he has, the life that is only not at a standstill because it is quietly running down its natural declivity into the grave; probably it is well

content after its fashion. But a man—no, it is obvious that he is always discontent, unless it be in some lowest hell reached after he has passed the long length of that road of second death. Then he may be satisfied in a new fashion, because, maybe, he is no longer man. Now he has still the prerogative of man, the hunger for more life which his capacity entails upon him ; he has no animal completeness. The prodigal son, in the far country and still prodigal at heart though bankrupt of possessions, ate swine's food rather than nothing ; and the insatiable appetite of human life, the longing for happiness in the increase of life, drives men hither and thither, through waste places and places that abound, seeking, always seeking, blindly and foolishly, or with the wisdom that is divine, for news of more life—Gospel news.

Again I remind myself that creative life in our world drives itself, by the myriad ways of its dispersal, to form the individual lives we see, and those we have for our own ; and that no one of them, not even man's, shews in itself the full capacity of life. Man—the microcosm, as we call him—is plainly wanting in the skill shown by the insect that is, for example, a better surgeon within its narrow range than any man. Some of these little ephemeral creatures die quickly after

laying their eggs. Never in the whole history of their race does any one of them see its descendants; and yet it will provide for the safety of coming generations by what looks like an elaborate, detailed, far-seeing care. Where we must learn gradually, and perhaps never know well, using guess, hypothesis, experiment, comparison, those creatures act directly and all but unerringly. They act as if they felt (and who shall say they do not feel?) the continuity of life from within; as if they shared other lives and other bodies as elements in their own, and could use them and work in them and for them or against them, as truly to their own purpose. We men have carried reflective intellectual power to the highest point reached in the animal kingdom; but we have neglected our elementary endowment of intuition. In the feel of the continuity of things, in an interior knowledge and power of life, we are far behind the attainment of the gad-fly. We pay for our intellectual supremacy; but all characters of life are our characters, and in the long run, if we will consent to learn our lesson, the right balance may be reached. Intellect may uplift our intuition and intuition may glorify intellect. We know not what we shall be; and the ways of growth we have neglected are open still.

Meanwhile we display (to the angels and the seers, if not elsewhere) a promising and plastic monstrosity. We are asymmetrical but not fixed; and therein lies our hope. Only in man is there any such monstrosity. For man, when he abandons his truth and yields himself to the sway of the senses or of the over-balancing intellect, keeps still his creative coördinating spirit, and has an organ fitted for the life of spirit. He may belie his own purpose, he may misuse his magnificent brain; but his capacity for God and his need of God stand manifest even in his failure to respond to the call of his longing and his power.

All this because, as I am continually telling myself, life has found in him alone a way towards ampler freedom, in which may be brought to fruition not only its sense character, its intellectual character, and even its intuitive character; but a wholeness of character that by advance in personal life raises all these towards a destined fulfilment in union with the life of the divine Spirit.

Man is powerful, "the reed that thinks," and poorer than any other creature upon earth. His poverty bears witness to his power; his poverty and his doom on earth, if earth were all.

"Still Moon, bright Moon, compassionate Moon above,
Thou shinedst there ere any life began,
When of his pain or of his powerless love
Thou heardest not from heart of any man;
Though long the earth had shaken off the vapour
Left by the vanished gleams of fire, the shaper,
Old, old, her stony wrinkled face did grow
Ere aught but her blind elements did move;
Dumb, bare, and prayerless thou saw'st her go,
And afterwards again shalt see her so.

"A time there was when Life had never been,
A time will be, it will have passed away;
Still wilt thou shine, still tender and serene,
When Life which in thy sister's yesterday
Had never flowered, will have drooped and faded;
Passed with the clouds that once her bosom shaded.
She will be barren then as not before,
Bared of her snows and all her garments green;
No darkling sea by any earthly shore
Will take thy rays: thy kin will be no more."

The poet (his fine poem on *The Moon* is in the second number of *The London Mercury*) knows death and the night that comes. We know also that if generation after generation is condemned to work for a generation that may well never come upon our transient earth, the tree of life is barren. It is barren for us who pass away; it will be barren still when the last catastrophe arrives, even though the generation reaping the profits of our toil has come; for the bitterness of final death will be theirs as it is ours. Our own disaster, too, is the greater if we must look

forward to that final death for them, and to a lifeless earth. We know this; it should be enough for us. No dream of naturalistic progress here can satisfy our needs. The night always comes and the grave is always dug.

"We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. 'Imperishable monuments' and 'immortal deeds,' death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that *is* be better or be worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect."

That is Mr. Balfour. Yet the title of the book which contains it is *The Foundations of Belief*. If it were not for the Good News of more life and in abundance, and for our faith that such life is the eternal meaning and fulfilment of our transitory days, we might well say that our tale is an idiot's, a tale of "sound and fury, signifying nothing." All human aspiration, the clamour of our spirits' need, the unveiling of possibilities inevitably frustrate here, would be vain and purposeless, like music from some statue of Memnon in a dead world.

Either there is unreason at the root of the universe or earth-life is not all the life for us.

* * *

February 7th.—I look again at the slow ascent from the steamy cloud-sheltered lagoon and the primaeval jelly-stuff, and even there I see life straining for a larger utterance—marvellous life with incalculable powers, and a profoundly hidden versatility. Through the uncounted millions of years it strains, finding its way very slowly and imperfectly, sometimes missing it, sometimes losing it after it had been found. At last it reaches, along the freest of its ways, the high expressiveness of arboreal man, our lowly

ancestor. He has a very mobile brain and for its use a tool of tools, the hand he had inherited from his amphibian forbears and had not spoilt by specializing it into, say, a paw or a wing. True, the apes, his near cousins in the trees, had also kept that hand; but life had not made a way of creative freedom in their brains as it had in his.

I think of this; and I see the tree-man driven by increasing cold into the shelters where we have found cave-man and his tool-work and artistry. Thence life moves at a faster pace, a gathering pace. From the beginning the pace of life in man has quickened; and from the men of the caves to us as we are is the matter of a lightning flash compared with the rise from a one-celled to a many-celled creature. Everything goes quicker for us; now each one of us condenses the whole ascent of life from cell to man (as I said St. John did, I remember) in his own short progress of a few short pre-natal months. Then—what then?

Very swiftly the child becomes the full-grown man, standing to face a world and knowing that he stands and faces it. This is the grand plateau of life, where it is able to turn round, as it were, upon itself, to know itself and a world. You may see it, with your imaginative eye, taking

breath, pausing, looking round, searching within, like *Le Penseur* of Rodin, the primitive man who first attained human soul-stature and heard a summons to reflective thought.

Here indeed is more life showing at last, on its long way of ascent, some signs of what it is all about, what it seeks in man and has begun to find.

But the way is now different, though the same ; there is " continuity of process, with the emergence of real differences," as Pringle-Pattison says. Always continuity, yet real differences emerging as *per saltum*. There was a moment when *Le Penseur* shook himself awake from the animal sleep-walking ; as there is a moment now when a man " repents " and " is converted." " Whereas I was blind, now I see," he says. And you may call it a moment, whether it comes as it came to St. Paul on the road to Damascus, or is coming (it may take a century or centuries) to us, politically, economically, in our societies and nations. For our fontal source of life (shall I call it now, since it has reached man, the immanent Spirit of God ? or Christ ? or the Word of God ?) strives with men, and at moments or in centuries their resistance fails and they are won. They are won to more life, to that for which they are always seeking even

when they seek it down blind alleys and along the crooked roads blindness and folly mark out.

We hear now of coöperation as the only remedy for our social ills. We hear of it everywhere—between nation and nation, between scholar and teacher, between labourer and capitalist, where not?—and it is to do away with war, open or disguised. There has certainly been war between teachers and scholars, labourer and capitalist, nation and nation, between every man almost and his neighbour, hitherto. We cannot see the relations between these as they really are until we see the gulf of difference there is between pulling with and pushing against, between working with and warring against. It is all of a piece, this mess of things. We tried forcing knowledge into children, forcing work out of workers, forcing other nations to let us have anything we wanted from them. And education was a by-word and a disgrace; there is industrial revolution; and our political peace is pregnant with war. Civilization is indicted at the bar of our self-interest as well as at the bar of justice, human and divine. So we are to coöperate.

I see coöperation in two shapes, as an angel of light foretelling real communion and personal fellowship; and as a servant of Mammon.

Honesty evidently (for the most part though not always) is the best policy; that is, it is profitable according to the maxims of the God Mammon. So, it seems, is coöperation. And I am strongly of opinion that it is. But I distrust the God Mammon and all his maxims. "More life" does not come that way. The Spirit does not strive with our spirits for that. And I can picture to myself a whole world of coöperators who shall certainly be more prosperous and more substantially comfortable, yet remain on the same level of life from which they started, while the Spirit grieves and in their spirits they fail.

Yet it may be otherwise. There is something gained by a man's being honest, even from policy; gained for the social whole if not for the individual man. And I see much gain through coöperation between teacher and taught; though I have to own that there Mammon has no fair field. It is out in the commercial, industrial, and generally developed world of societies of the grown-up that he has his due chance. There I fear him, even among coöperators, who are at least imitating methods of the Spirit. Nevertheless, imitation is itself informing. Just as you may make yourself feel angry by imitating an angry face and body, frowning, glaring,

clenching your fists, so you may (perhaps or probably) make yourself incline to love your neighbour as yourself by acting as though you did. I am not sure that this is not one of the subtle schemes of life, through which "function," as the biologists say, induces "structure." And from the bottom of my soul I hope it is; for we are being driven to try it. War of all kinds, like thieving, stands discredited as not bringing us safely what we want.

After all, self-interest should, you may say, lead us into the way of more life. In a deep sense it should; but there comes in the paradox of the more life that is fitting, true, real, for any man who is a man. He has entered upon his heritage of life and owns it. So he must lay it down if he is to gain life. That is the law of life for all owners of it, even, it seems, for God, who in laying down his life for us wins us and ours for himself. The Cross in the heart of God and the Cross on the hill at Jerusalem tell the secret of man. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." "Die to live."

Both these adjurations would sound absurd to arboreal man, nearly as absurd as they would sound to a monkey or a goldfish. And they would be absurd. But to St. John, for instance, or to General Gordon, or Rabindranath Tagore,

they would be truisms. What are they to us, to you and me ?

* * *

February 20th.—It is said of Jacopone da Todi (I quote, naturally, Evelyn Underhill) " that when he came out of his prison and the glory of an Italian autumn met eyes which for five years had seen only the walls of his underground den, he composed and sang the beautiful *lauda* which praises the Love of God as revealed in Creation ; seen, heard, and tasted in all lovely things." The legend is a legend, the author warns us, but " we should like to believe it." Certainly this poet and devotee of God had changed from " the bitter distrust of the senses and contempt for their reports " which marked his early ascetic period, to the joy in them which he showed in later life and sang of in that *lauda*, of which these are the first two stanzas.

" O amor, divino amore,
perché m'hai assediato ?
Pare de me empazato,
non puoi de me posare.

" Da cinque parte veggio
che m'hai assediato :
audito, viso, gusto,
tatto ed odorato ;
se esco, so pigliato,
non me te pos' occultare."

I cannot resist entering here Mrs. Theodore Beck's rendering in English of these stanzas :—

"O Love Divine and Great,
Why dost Thou still besiege my heart ?
Of me infatuate Thou art,
From me Thou canst not rest !

"My five engirdling battlements
Are all besieged by Thee ;
The Ear, the Eye, Taste, Smell, and Touch,
By Love, mine Enemy :
If I come forth I cannot flee,
Nor hide me from Thy quest."

God, it seems, makes all avenues of approach to us his avenues. Yet how carefully and carelessly we avoid him and let our enemies come in ! I am reminded, perforce, of Francis Thompson :

"I fled Him, down the nights and down the days ;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years ;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind ; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped ;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'"

So the secret is told. There is only one way, the way he is, the way that is Christ. Do we not know it when once we have found Christ? Were not all ways ways of betrayal for us when we were betraying him? And there, facing us, the awful fact stands—we can and do betray him, even though we "cast out devils" in his name, taking it in vain.

We can betray him too without knowing his name, while we entertain subtle devils whom we decide to see as angels of light and permit to betray us who are willing, even desirous, to be betrayed. *Populus vult decipi.* So the world goes on, according to its desire. "We love we know not what, and therefore everything allures us."

Jacopone da Todi had found good practical cause as well as bad doctrinal reasons for distrusting those avenues of sense in which later he learnt to walk with God. Until the world is transfigured to the divine kingdom or until our own "fourfold vision" translates it for us as at least a theophany, sense, mind, our own hearts, are all dangerous and convoy hidden dangers to us. They are "natural," we say; we must rely on them, we must obey their impulse; they are guaranteed by nature and nature's law. But everyone of them proves traitorous. Then, perhaps, the ascetic revolutionary that lurks in

most men has his revenge. "All or none," he says, "you have tried all, it must be none." And the ascetic revolutionary is supported by a false God.

If God is away there, remote, a judge, a king, with commands and doom to administer; if he reigns without, impassible, severe, the once manufacturing Great First Cause, not the Poet and Lover of his worlds; if he is a God of our inheritance from before Christ whom theologians and we have vainly tried to harmonize with the God in Christ; we may well despair of finding anything but betrayal through our senses. It is not he that we find; it is only his handiwork, and that has been spoilt since he abandoned it. So it seems.

The God who is Love and is by nature the supreme Self-giver, the God who is Father to Jesus Christ and to us, whose love for us is the Hound of Heaven that never halts in pursuit of us—this God does us no such evil turn.

Theologians speak of God's immanence, his dwelling in his creatures; they also speak of his transcendence over them. When they do I am always moved to ask how a God can dwell in us unless he comes to us from beyond. The pantheist's God is not indwelling; he is one with the world; he is the world and the world is he.

It is only a transcendent God who can come to us and as immanent take up his abode with us. If he does this, as I am assured he does, he and his worlds, my senses, my mind, my whole nature and every nature, are illuminated for me. The world of sense, the world of thought, I myself, may reveal him—or, in the want of him, also may reveal him. Without him they signify him, as darkness signifies light, injustice, justice, and all evil good.

If a man has eyes to see God and the want of God, his world becomes more than a theophany, it is a sacrament; he lives in the midst of divine wonders communicated to him. And he cannot be among those who ask for signs of God, because all things for him are signs of God; the ordered and mysterious universe he touches and handles, and ordered or unordered men. There is nothing that does not show either God or the dreadful want of God. And a man's life, when he is not betraying life, is to him that which has carried him upward from the dust to where he has met with God; and is carrying him still.

* * *

February 22nd.—A new and grander Book of Genesis has been opened for us lately. Chris-

tians, I note, are slow to read it. Yet if they could only get rid of their belief that the Bible, the collection of books they have inherited as their *Biblia Sacra*, is an isolated and completed record of the working of God for men and with men, they would, I think, allow the new Genesis a place of high honour.

I often wonder whether they believe that the Spirit of Wisdom has rested since the last page of their Bible was turned, or whether they think there was no recording instrument for Wisdom's work before letters were invented. You would think so, when you see them exasperatingly turning their backs on the writings in chalk and stone and coal measures and gravel in the earth's crust. Those records, at all events, were not distorted by any human amanuensis before they were opened to be read. And they tell of the Creator's manner and method, and from beginning to end they treat of the history of man and must be interpreted through man. You would be sure, wouldn't you ? that every religious man would eagerly study such a record that he might learn about God and himself. I am bewildered as well as exasperated because it is men who are not religious that are far more desirous of such knowledge. Yet I know the established difficulty of getting into men's minds any idea, any

attraction, that does not accord with habit and old convictions, however ill acquired. We are spoilt, I suppose, most of us, in early youth; the springs of receptivity that belong to youth are dried up within us by heaps of arid information which we never wanted and can never use. William James says somewhere that most men cease to be plastic at twenty-five. They are prematurely old by that time; for the remainder of their lives they drag the same ideas round and round like superannuated horses in a mill.

Moreover, many Christians hold that a duty proclaimed by influential persons, which involves going round and round in a theological mill, is binding on them. To look for words of God in the crust of the earth, and in creatures either dead long ago or alive and letting out secrets now to scientific men, might turn out to be rash innovation. For these Christians science remains suspect; the geological record is now as dangerous as the telescope was once. Even men of official standing in the Church, men of intelligence and cultivation too, whose minds have not been fixed at twenty-five, are sometimes distrustful of science. I asked the late Dr. Figgis why he had said what he did say about it in *The Gospel and Human Needs*, why he had accused it of describing the whole world of life and things

as iron-bound by mechanical necessity (I forget his actual words), and so leaving no room for God. He said: "Because I thought that was true"; and explained that he had learnt since "from The Hibbert" that it was not. You will notice, if you look at his book, that his argument for the human need to have miracles in order to show that God exists and works is considerably damaged if what he says of science cannot stand. But that is by the way. The thing I feel incumbent on me is to note what justification there was for such a mistake on his part, and how that justification has ceased to be.

There once was justification, at least for men who could not distinguish between knowledge of truth in experience and interpretation of it or inference from it. I remember a meeting of pathetic old gentlemen, a quarter of a century after the publication of *The Origin of Species*, who were protesting with all their poor might against any evolutionary science. I remember well the look of forlorn hope in that assembly. It was forlorn indeed and soon died out altogether. But (and here comes in the justification for Dr. Figgis which he might reasonably have claimed in the last century) the sciences of life fell victims for a time to the sciences of matter.

Mechanism overcame them. I, for instance, was taught physiology, by a most distinguished professor of it, as the physics and chemistry of the animal body regarded as a machine. So life was disregarded; and the living mind of man became an insignificant, irrelevant product of his mechanically working body. Science had not gone far enough.

Such a state of things amply justified Christian protest, though not in the ill-considered, wholesale and undiscriminating shape it frequently took. But that state of things has not lasted, could not last. Science was bound to go further. The new biology is not dependent on physics and chemistry and mechanics for its principles. It has its own; and it has found the need of them because many new facts have been discovered. New experiments have been made, and new interpretations and new terms had to be provided.

This is plain enough for most of us now; but years ago there were men who saw that the mechanistic stage must pass. Lotze, in this extract from his *Metaphysic*, showed the weakness of that position: "Those who pray too much are destined, says the proverb, to pray themselves through heaven and to keep geese on the other side. A better fate has befallen

those who, out of a conscientious regard for the interests of science, have felt themselves compelled to derive Organic Life from blind chance and purposeless matter. They have invested their original principles with so much reason and power of internal development that nothing but the caprice of their terminology, which keeps to the names of Matter, Mechanism, and Accident, for what other people call Spirit, Life, and Providence, seems to prevent them from relapsing into notions which they have before strenuously opposed."

Lotze did not live to see the mechanistic terminology changed for one more befitting life; but he saw what had to come, or rather, not seeing, he certainly believed. As to us, we have only to open our eyes and look. There is ample evidence before us that no living creature is a machine. Hence the new biology; hence many fascinating pages in the new Book of Genesis. And above all, hence a meeting-place between science and religion, where the scientific study of the world merges into the vision of sacrament, and the scientific study of man into the discovery of divine incarnation.

Have many of us Christians read much in this new book, which is not only of origins but of destiny, not only of the manners of God but of

his purpose ? Have many of us, even of those who have bent themselves to find the religious values of the old tradition of the Bible and of the later tradition of the Creeds, sought religious values in the revelation of science ? I think not. Yet they are there, and may be had for no great hardship in seeking.

The Genesis of the Hebrew Testament is a great book. Compare its tradition of the beginning of things with any others in *The Golden Bough* and you will confess that it is great. It is worthy of a great people. But it is not what it seemed once. Its cosmogony is poetry, not history. Now, in our new Genesis, we are unveiling facts of history and reading the true record of the world for the first time. It gives us a volume of the works of the supreme Poet, whose epic is the universe.

" And thus have you a Gate, in the prospect even of this world, whereby you may see into God's Kingdom."

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February 25th.—When I learnt how a sea-urchin's egg helps to upset the mechanistic interpretations of biology made in the nineteenth century I became a biological enthusiast, and added more biological chapters to my new

Genesis. I learnt that if, instead of letting this egg, the cell, divide again after its first division into two cells, you skilfully remove one of the two, you will get not half an embryo-urchin, as on the mechanical theory you would expect, but a whole one, small indeed but whole. You may even let the two cells divide into four and take away three of them, yet have the happy result of an embryo, smaller still but just as whole. A newt's egg, or a frog's, will do the same for you.

That fired me. Behind this business I saw the life of a self-guiding creature dodging attempts to thwart its intentions—a persevering life, a clever life inventing a new plan, and (as a biologist has said) "working out its own salvation upon original and individual lines."

What do you think Huxley would have made of this? I am sure he would have revised his conviction that human creatures are "conscious automata," and that human minds are "epiphenomenal" shadows cast by the solid material stuff of their brains. If that experiment, and all the researches of Dr. Haldane and other physiologists into the delicate cleverness of the body's adjustment to varying conditions had been made in his time, we should have had our new biology far sooner. Indeed, it is likely that the mechan-

istic scheme would never have had a chance of dominating over ordinary men : it was new, a mushroom growth that sprang up in a night and has died down in a day. Or if it has not died (Huxley himself said that there is nothing men hate more than having to revise their convictions), it is dying fast.

There is no escaping the moral of these things for us Christians, unless we are firmly set against revising certain of our own convictions. At least so it seems to me ; although the back of my mind is haunted by a ghost of a suspicion that unless Christians can be caught very young and then taught, for instance, the new Genesis as a comment on the old, and the new criticism of New Testament documents as corrective of the old, they will for long continue to escape. Many of their teachers were brought up to believe that precious things of the spirit would be lost if the letter of the law were publicly tampered with ; and they continue to teach. I heard a dignitary in the pulpit of St. Paul's declare that if the Bible in his hand was not without mistakes from cover to cover the Christian Faith was lost. That was many years ago ; no man in the pulpit of St. Paul's would dare or even wish nowadays to say anything of the kind. But it is one thing to be silenced by force from without and quite

another to speak freely and in courageous candour from within. Our teachers still have their guarding reservations; but I want to see welcome given to every gleam of new light; I want to see them eagerly looking for new light, confident that the Spirit of God may find openings for his wisdom everywhere and that he abides with men. I want them to act as though St. John meant something for our own days when he spoke of the Spirit given that men might be led into all truth. I want them to know to good practical purpose that Christ has still many things to tell, which still they "cannot bear." It will be well for them to learn to bear those already told. If they do not they may perhaps make themselves stone-deaf to those that are to come.

It is true that no preacher in St. Paul's could make the Christian faith depend now on the inerrancy of the Bible; but only a little while ago an able and honest writer, a well-known clergyman, said that if proof were forthcoming that Jesus was not born of a Virgin the whole fabric of the Faith would be destroyed for him. And lesser clergymen are saying the same thing. So it is only one precarious holding after another for such men. In one set it is an infallible Bible, in another an infallible Church; for this man now

it is the Virgin Birth, just as for that (but centuries ago) it was a fixed earth with a satellite sun. Yet there can be no knowledge that is not knowledge about God, whether it be of the nature of things, or of birds, beasts and fishes, of rocks and flowers, or of man, his history and his sacred books, his mind and his body. Does not God indwell his worlds by his Spirit and his creative Word, by the energy of his abounding life and his self-giving love ? Shall we let ourselves be deceived by the limits that he himself encounters, those limits which he embraces and of which he has made stepping-stones for love ? Shall we allow ourselves to forget that in coming forth as Creator of a creation that is to culminate in persons, also in their measure creative, also in their measure free, he has set those limits for himself ? Is it reasonable that because he is not the maker of a puppet-show where all goes smoothly, we should neglect or fear to look into the noble field of his enduring labour in which his Spirit has striven to utter the Word that he would have us hear ?

Our advance towards union with God is no mere affair of a departmental business called, to distinguish it, religion. Religion is not a profession to be followed ; it is the colour, the attitude and the direction, of a life. The Christian

does his own principles a grievous wrong when he narrows them to the affairs of a professional or confessional religion. They should apply to every kind of knowledge ; they are clues to the deeper meaning of everything that we know or discover, and there is nothing that we know which does not, if we will, enlarge their meaning and their range. "As long as I am ignorant that the World is mine, the love of God is defective to me."

"No end is there, O Lord, to thy praises, and no count of thy Praisers.

"What atom is there that danceth not with abandon in thy praise ? "

* * *

February 29th.—It may be because men have not thought of the Cross in the heart of God as "the ground-plan of the Universe," that they show so little interest in his life in nature and in the long course of the ascent that we call natural. I think that it is ; for indeed we do not find in our new book of Genesis that the way of God in creation has ever been smooth for him. The divine Word uttered from the beginning of our world seems to have always met with resistance even before it met it in us ; though the two

resistances are not the same. Ours is above all that of a person over against a person; the resistance of the impersonal to the Creator is of another order. It is, I think, of the many orders through which life rose.

I picture these latter orders, though very different from ours, as continuous with ours. I think I see some foreshadowing in all things of the relative autonomy which is personal and growing freedom in us men. For the divine Poet to embody his poetic Mind involves, surely, both a medium to be used and recipients for his gifts. And in the medium as in the recipients we see the Creator imposing on himself limits as he makes for himself means. He stoops to win; he uses limits that he may give in a thousand varying measures his own power, his own freedom, his love, and at last himself, as they can be received. So we see him "cribb'd, cabined and confined" by the things and the men that he has made. In impersonal things he too is impersonal; we see in them life that has come from him but not himself. There we see this life opposed as well as accepted; but only in man he himself is opposed. Yet the Cross of all is borne in his heart, for in all he must both strive and suffer.

Our new book of Genesis tells a long history

of his energy of creative love, and of suffering too. That is, it tells it, or should tell it, to Christians. I do not suppose that the sorrows of Gigantosaurus, with its hundred feet or more of clumsy length, when food grew scarce and the extinction long threatened came near, were in proportion to its size; they were probably far less than those of a starving cat. But such as they were, I am sure that God knew and bore them.

We talk of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest: let us bear in mind that in the drama those tragic words imply all the actors partake of divine life given to them to be their own, but not severed from the Giver. It is an appalling, yet a reassuring thought. And far more appalling is the thought of the pain in the heart of God that we human creatures cause, we who share his personal life and are sons begotten of his love, not merely creatures made. Yet even this is reassuring, too.

It is worse than useless for us to ignore the presence of the teeming life from God in nature, when we cannot ignore it in ourselves. We are parts of nature, joined by indissoluble bonds to every other part. We are one with all parts by descent and constitution, by breeding and feed-

ing, by birth and death. And it is both unwise and faithless to turn away from the rest of nature and say that the witness to God is not to be found there, because it is and always has been a scene of conflict and distress and pain. It is a scene also of love and loveliness and of the pleasures of abounding vitality and comradeship, even of loving sacrifice. Dare we say God is shut out from that? The sacrificing love that guards the new generation—"the species-preserving love"—is both a forerunner of the sacrifice men give for love's own sake and a witness to the sacrifice of God. If we recognize him there in the beauty of things, we cannot deny him in the rest, in the groaning and travailing of things; in their wars, in their defeats, in their degradation and their loss.

This is not pantheism, though it is panentheism, which is permitted to the firm believer in a transcendent God of his nature self-communicating, the supreme Giver and Lover who stoops even to the lowest. The God of the pantheist does not stoop. But the Christian's does. He is made known as present by his supporting power and love in the extremity of created lowliness; although he could not be known thus were he not otherwise and more fully known in

men. In us he has made a wider way for his giving, although here too he stoops.

> "I come in the little things, saith the Lord.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Till by such art
> I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan,
> Pass the low lintel of the human heart."

* * *

March 2nd.—Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, who taught me some years ago to respect metals as sensitive creatures apt to be fatigued, has been giving a lesson more pertinent to my present train of thought. In *The Times* of December 13th last there was an account of his researches into the manner of life in plants. (I keep these things by me lest I forget.) He had discovered that it was possible to transplant trees without injuring them "if the operation were performed while they were subject to the effects of an anæsthetic." By his "crescograph" (the barbarous word explains itself) the highest powers of the microscope were magnified a hundred thousand times. He had been able to show, in the depths of an English winter, plants that were stimulated to shake off their torpor, and grow at a rate which the spot of light of the machine indicated by rushing across a ten-foot scale in

twelve seconds. This meant, of course, a growth of about a hundred thousandth of an inch a second. The experimenter could modify this at will: "a depressing chemical agent was applied and the march of life was slowed down; a timely application of a suitable stimulant revived the dying plant and exalted the growth-activity to many times the normal rate." Then this modern Wise Man of the East points out that the rate of growth in plants is a matter of great practical importance and the control of it a new and valuable instrument for man; but he delights me by saying, as according to the report he did say, that "of infinitely greater importance was the fundamental unity of life reactions" in plants and in animals, which he had been able to show. The spontaneous pulsation in certain plant tissues which in animals is heart-beat, "the identical effects," of stimulants, anæsthetics and poisons in vegetable and animal tissues, and the "death-spasm" which occurred in both—all tell the same tale. And a wonderful tale it is, yet one that should be confirmed for us by what has come to us through other means.

Life dreams in the plants, walks in its sleep in animals, is awake in man—so Bergson says. Life is one through all its rising orders of display. Awake in us (more or less, for some of us

too often dream and others seem always walking in their sleep) the many-streaming fountain of life plays from the beginning until now. I remind myself once more of that continuity shown throughout all creation in one real difference after another or side by side with many others. I look out into the company of stars, and among them the eye of my mind searches out nebula after nebula charged, each of them, to that eye, with the potency and promise which has come to life on this little earth.

Out there accompanying the suns there must be many earths, and (I think probably) no one of them just like ours; but I am obliged to believe that the life which is God's must be striving there to manifest him as it strives here, and under limitation as it is here. Continuity again, and perhaps differences that are enormous, yet differences in the one life.

When people talk about life being unlikely on any planet except our own, because no other planet is in precisely the same state, of precisely the same size or related in precisely the same way to a sun that is either ours or a duplicate of ours, I wonder at their provincialism. A power that was expressed in Diplodocus and the Ammonites, in Pterodactyls and the Mega-

therium, and is now shown in deep sea fishes and the Soldanella of the Alps, in crabs and gorillas, in the yeast plant and the gigantic Sequoia, in bacteria and in man, has shown even here an ability and a resourcefulness that should carry our minds beyond the province that happens to be our own.

"What is man that thou art mindful of him?" What indeed? After roaming in imagination over those vast spaces we may well return to see ourselves as motes dancing in the divine sunlight. And if we do not see the love of God embracing every mote in his creation we may well doubt our own place in that love. True, man is a "reed that thinks"; in thought he can roam over those spaces; but who shall say that his thinking is not, to the thinking of mighty creatures in worlds to us unknown, as the sensitiveness of a metal is to ours?

* * *

March 5th.—Is there anything, I ask you, that will satisfy the craving for miracles in generation after generation of men who are not always "evil and adulterous," if the marvellous facts of man and nature do not? The craving is not always vicious. Although it certainly was

vicious in those men of Palestine who "sought after marvels as the Greeks after wisdom," and faced the spiritual beauty of truth and holiness incarnate in Jesus Christ without seeing it, I am inclined to think that in many others it is a natural unperverted and unexaggerated desire capable of being exalted into a relation with truth. We are not made for "a machine-like world, correct and dull." We are made for adventure, for encounter with new things, for the joys of discovery and the wealth of revelation. Yet there are men who have been trained out of that nature; there are men who, in spite of their dry knowledge of the marvels I have been writing about lately, miss all their deep significance. They have that in them which destroys wonder; they are Peter Bells for whom the glory of God would be an example of incandescence. They would peep and botanize in Paradise.

Most of us crave for marvel; and in some of us the desire is certainly a vice. Now, in our crowds, we are superstitious to the core; and religious people, even theologians, who have never passed under what Baron Friedrich von Hügel calls "the Caudine forks of science," or through its "bath of purification," suffer from the taint and lust of magic which clings to the

Christian religion still. When I think of the many streams that have converged in Christianity and remember how widespread magic is, I am not surprised at this. *The Golden Bough* explains it.

Then again, there is a strong traditional support for miracle. The Bible notion of it, for which the Old Testament is chiefly responsible, still holds its place. There we have neither Augustinian nor scholastic ingenuity of compromise; only the plain religious man's plain belief that God makes his laws, issues his commands, from time to time, moment to moment, as a man may fit his conduct to this occasion or that. He ordains that water shall most often run down hill, and he once ordained that in the Red Sea it should make walls between which his people might pass to their deliverance. The great interest about a miracle was not the act, nor the power in the act, but the purpose and the favour shown. God was like a man who could with his sword strike one and spare another. In his hand all the powers of earth and heaven were held as weapons and as tools. The vital question was whether he would use them, or could be induced to use them, for or against this man or that, this enterprise or another. The important thing, the interesting thing, was his

attitude, because it was the attitude of an arbitrary power that might be either friendly or inimical, useful or calamitous. About the existence and the untrammelled range of that power there could be no question ; for who in fact moved the sun round the earth, who rained water on the hills, who brought all things to birth or death, to triumph or disaster, but the Lord of all ? It was a simple world, where man was weak and God strong, God did everything and man what he allowed ; it was all a matter of power and arbitrary choice ; there was no reason why from to-day or to-morrow water should not run uphill, or the sun never set again.

Nor is there any reason now, you may say, except the reason that is God's. Well, be it so ; that is all the reason we have. The reason that is God's is, in fact, what we have been studying ever since study began.

Power we felt very early, in its resistance or pliancy to our will ; reason emerged later, as we sought a law and order in things to match the law and order of our own intelligence. We invented laws which we believed to be enactments, laws differing among themselves in rank and grade ; and so we made, not discovered, a scheme in which one law might be used to super-

sede another. To this system, it seemed, God himself must bow, although, as we believed, he made it. His will, no longer arbitrary, was governed by a constant reason. When he interfered miraculously he neither laid down a new law nor broke an old one ; he only brought into new use some higher and more inclusive law. So he carried out his particular will for a particular case, so he showed his special favour or displeasure, brought to light some new manifestation of his will for man ; and this was miracle. It was wonderful, it was rare ; but it was neither lawless nor unnatural.

This scheme has broken down. Our scientific laws of nature are avowedly made by men ; we confess that they are hypothetical and summarize a narrow experience. They are useful formulae, enabling us to frame our questioning of nature more intelligently, to deal more easily with things, and to predict with good success. They are tools, handy tools, our own tools. We forge them, fit them to things, use them in order to use things. We are quite aware that they are neither perfect nor immutable ; that, in fact, they are not rarely improved, changed, or even thrown away ; we are ready any minute to make a new set of tools if occasion demands. And the totality of things is fluent in our eyes,

though slowly. Nevertheless we do not live in an "incalculable miscellany of miracles" any more than in a "government department, correct, regular and dull." We find that just because we can deal with the world, and count upon the world, as if it were of a determined order, we are able to live as men growing towards an ordered freedom. We are established by the relative stability of things, strengthened and enlarged, kept in the way of freedom, by a cosmos we can only bend, and that with difficulty, but never break. When we think of God in his dealings with us, we think of him as entering into our finitude, and manifesting himself in his cosmos, according to its conditions. We think of him as conditioned by the freedom, the order, the reason, he gives to his creation, as well as by his own freedom, order and reason.

An aeonian change, holding our limits within itself as mere fragments of its process, no doubt would manifest God's will as our world never can. Finite though even that vast change must be, entailing upon him still the process and the manner of a finite manifestation, it passes in its greatness far beyond the grasp of human faculty. We men are creatures of a day, of this little earth; we are ephemera of an hour's

dance ; the slow sun of that majestic time-span stands motionless in the only heaven we can see.

We have changed once more our setting for the glories of God, repainted the background against which we see the working of his will for men. Yet we Christians know him favourable or displeased, as well as they knew who wrote of the waters piling themselves up and food raining down from above the firmament, to help his children. How has all this change of setting and background affected our notions about miracle ?

It is not true that for the scientific man the world is " a closed circle," as Dr. Figgis said ; but it is true that he finds profit in treating it as though it were. It is not true that it is " like a government department " ; yet only on condition of ascribing to its order at least a relative fixity can we predict safely what it will be and do, and guide ourselves by our forecasts. And because we find our profit on that one condition, we believe that for our purposes its order is as fixed as it seems. The belief *works ;* therefore we call it true. This is the pragmatism of science, which has driven out its dogmatism. Yet even that bygone dogmatism did not settle *a priori* the possibility or impossibility of

miracles. It settled nothing *a priori;* how could it? The question of meeting a centaur walking down Regent Street is a question of evidence and experience, as Huxley pointed out. No man can say that because no man has seen it, therefore a centaur, in Greece or in Regent Street, is impossible. Science is not concerned with what *can* happen, but with what has happened or is likely or unlikely to happen. So the field has always been open to miracle, as far as the future and science are concerned.

With the present and the past it is different. For when and if a miracle really happens it enters the world of experience; it becomes a part of history and tradition; it is perhaps documentary, a subject for study; it is certainly a subject for criticism in the scientific way and spirit. It takes its place, for good or ill, with many miracles that have not happened; and we have to distinguish it from them, to "try the spirits," lest God be mocked and we deceived. How shall we distinguish it?

How indeed? And first, what is it? What is a miracle that happens? Not, plainly, the sort of thing a man does when he moves his little finger; although that is an unpenetrated mystery. Nor the sort of thing an earthquake does when it swallows a province or a city;

although that is wholly beyond the power of man, at present. Nor is it as the birth of worlds in the star-clouds of space, or their destruction there; although that, probably, is beyond the power of man for ever. None of these things is a miracle. And the conversion of sinners into saints is not a miracle, although it is the co-öperation of God and man; and sometimes, in our wonder, we Christians call it a miracle, a miracle, that is, "of grace."

Sacramental gifts are not miraculous; the incarnation of God in man is not miraculous; heaven is not miraculous; nor hell. What is?

Here is matter for our attention; and upon the result of our attention, not on any *a priori* judgement whatever, must depend the lasting of a reasonable belief or disbelief in the only miracles we are now able to consider seriously. And whatever we decide, for or against, the real world will remain, as always, "coloured and changeful, gay with multitudinous laughter and dark with many tears." It will be a world calling for and winning redemption, a world in which love is the only remedy for wretchedness unspeakable, a world of mystery, marvel and power, a world of the ever new and ever growing freedom of man, of the spirit striving against the

flesh and the flesh against the spirit. It seems that in such a world as this we are in no great need of what men ordinarily call miracle, to reveal the marvel and the mystery of God, of his love, his power, and his will for men, of himself as their only redeemer.

Yet if, with Sir Thomas Browne, I may say that my whole life is a miracle of so many years, I shall be happy with the word and the thing. Then I shall say, too, with Traherne that by the very right both of my senses and my spirit I enjoy the world. I shall receive it as divine. "You never enjoy the world aright," Traherne tells us, "till you see how a sand exhibiteth the wisdom and power of God." In that way of seeing all is miracle; but it is not the ordinary way or the ordinary miracle. "The world is a mirror of infinite beauty, yet no man sees it. It is a Temple of Majesty, yet no man regards it. When Jacob waked out of his dream, he said '*God is here, and I wist it not. How dreadful is this place!* This is none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven.'"

A man in a dream may well ask God to show himself, but when he awakes he should see nothing that is not revealing God. Are we dreamers that we see the world as a physical machine, as a pasture for our greed, or even as a

prison for the soul? If God is not here he is nowhere; let us open our eyes. Teresa told her nuns that she asked no great things of them—"I only ask you to look," she said.

* * *

March 6th.—The search for signs and wonders in the wrong place is a vice of at least intellect, in many Christians still. Our old habit of looking for God in the abnormal and overlooking him in the normal has not yet lost its hold. We made a theology of "the gap" in knowledge; and as one gap after another closed under the growing pressure of knowledge we thought, and our opponents thought, that we had only fancied God had been working there. Instead of learning to distrust the whole principle of gaps we merely shifted our defences from one to another. The course of our history makes me ready to believe that our prehistoric ancestors found a trial to faith in the fact that, in spite of every persuasive offering or magic threat to the reigning fetish, or the spirit of the biggest dead chief, two and two persistently made four. I am of a mind to say that some people may have doubted their religion because the evaluation of π did not succumb to prayer

and fasting. Certainly the Copernican astronomy tried faith severely, as severely perhaps as evolutionary science tried it in the nineteen sixties and seventies; and, I am assured, for some Christians tries it now.

But why? Always because we do not see the normal of nature and man as God's own, through which, in which, and by which, he is at work. We think that it is not for him to work under limits and by means, although both come from him and have their very being and continual sustenance in him. What is familiar to us cannot, we assume, be manifesting God. In short, we do not believe in his Incarnation, and in his Holy Spirit as permeating ours according to his good pleasure and our response. Only "signs and wonders," things unfamiliar to us, works in which we are used as puppets and the world is used as a puppet-show, prove God to us. He must depart from the ever marvellous course of creative and created life, and catch our wandering attention by cutting violently across it.

Just now our newest science, psychology, is making great advances. We are learning about our minds as fast, I daresay, as we learnt about evolving species. And once more a gap is closing: we are, at last perhaps, being driven,

in default of another gap not yet attacked, to look for God where he may be found, in our knowledge instead of in our ignorance, in the normal, however various, that *is*, instead of in the kind of abnormal that is not. And once more some of us, and our opponents, think that because knowledge has invaded the difficult region of ourselves there is now no place there for God. Where we know, it seems for such people that he cannot be. Where we act or think or feel, he must be powerless. His field of operation is confined to the regions not yet scientifically explored. We are like the makers of old maps who could write fairy-names across their empty spaces. And now, when there are no empty spaces on the kind of maps we use, there is no room for fairy-names anywhere. There is, perhaps, no fairy anywhere, no God—at least no God who does anything and counts for anything in our lives.

I believe that the root of this trouble for Christians lies in our picturing the incarnation of God as a sort of sublime conjuring trick by which he came to us once in the guise, or rather the disguise, of a man. In that picture we have a sign and a wonder matching well our intellectual vice. And, consequently, we have painted God's dealings with us after that likeness. Not "in

and as and through " the order in which we live, but by breaking across it, God comes to us and dwells with us. The supernatural does not raise and fulfil the natural; it displaces it. So, when the psychologist comes and shows us how intimately and gloriously natural our highest experience is, we do not see that he is only showing us the beauty of the process by which the temporal is embraced and permeated by the eternal, the nature of man lifted up in the nature of God. We and the psychologist alike decide that God has nothing to do with our uplifting. And, obviously, we may just as well say that God has nothing to do with the universe because we have learnt a little (how little !) about our corner of it.

Yet we Christians have learnt, very many of us (most, who have taken any trouble to be instructed) to discover God in that corner everywhere. We see him in the creative evolution of the worlds. Astronomy, physical science in general, biological science (except psychology) have lost their terrors for most of us. We have learnt to set their treatises beside our Bible. God who is over all things indwells all things, and works with them under the limits that creation involves. We have come to see all that. And the enemies of Christianity, who thought it

was destroyed each time that Christians were dismayed, have seen it rise again among us to new strength and a more inclusive life. We have come to see God in the normality and variety of his everlasting creative work. We recognize that it endures only because it is supported by his eternal life. So we have ceased to look there for abnormal signs and wonders; and our reward has been to find all things full of wonder, the whole visible creation one great sign.

I say "we" have come thus far; but I know that still many of us lag behind. Yet in the main neither responsible men among Christians, nor the ordinary rank and file, are afraid on these grounds. It is different, I am sorry to say, even in some otherwise enlightened quarters, with the matter of psychology, suggestion, psycho-analysis and so forth. This is the new enemy (or deliverer, as it seems to me); and because the principle of a gap-theology has not been duly recognized and therefore abandoned, we hear of faith weakening under a new attack. The last refuge, it appears, is menaced. The old intellectual vice, driven from the outer world and from our bodies, has found shelter with some men in the inmost fastness of their mind. Let us hope that it will not survive this latest onslaught.

We have only to see that God is above all most real and most natural, and we find that subordinately real and natural processes are his ways as well as ours, so far as they are ours. We have been misled, I think, not only by the gap theology, but by a trick of language. When we have said " supernatural " we have allowed ourselves to be caught by a word and made to forget that the supernature of God is true nature, truer, more real, than ours ; and that the Christian faith means that our nature as it is, like our " personality " (which is part of it), is destined to partake of supernature and to pass into it by a truly natural transition through our union with God. Nature in us is (as Lotze says of personality in us), only a " pale copy " of the nature of which it is a promise. There is no gulf between the natural and the supernatural, only a way on which to travel, the vital, natural way. " The whole scandal [of the psychological attack] is from the fancy of a Man-God outside Nature, moulding and moving things like a mechanist."

I cannot guess what the next serious attack upon our faith will be. Hitherto those of science (that is, those engineered by men who use science for an unscientific purpose) have advanced from far to near, from the sun and stars

to our own bodies, and have conspicuously failed as attacks but have been successful as deliverances. We have gained all along the line of their advance, although undeniably we have suffered badly by the way—through our own most grievous fault. Now we are assaulted in what seems the last place on this line of proceeding, the last place, too, where the mechanist God should ever have been thought of. Another line may be found; but we have reached the end of this, as, I think, we have reached the end of difficulty raised by the literary criticism of our documents which has been one agent of our deliverance. When this is over and our faith stands out purer and stronger, Christ will in his marvellous way have subdued by means of it the vice he stigmatized in those piercing words: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe."

There will be no room left for the decent housing of that vice in the Christian soul. But isn't it odd that we should have been so long in learning his lesson? "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

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March 8th.—There is another God besides the mechanist, who is a serious peril; indeed there are two. Perhaps I ought to say there are many, as in practical life there certainly are. But in regard to thought and idea and doctrine and speculation two of them, with the mechanist, stand out chief. One is the Sultan of the Skies, the Eastern potentate who is responsible for most of Christian men's prayers as slaves and not as sons, and for most of the petitions in which they ask to have divine ways changed to suit their ways by a kindly and omnipotent but uncertain Ruler. We inherited him from before the birth of Jesus; and Jesus tried to make us disavow him. We might have disavowed him if we had not so often disavowed the God and Father of our Lord instead. As it is he remains, to confuse our religion and make us a laughing-or a cursing-stock in the world.

The other very dangerous God is the one "without passions," the impassible God of theology in whose heart a Cross has never been. He is assuredly not the God of whom Jesus Christ is the supreme revealer. We do not recognize his lineaments in the divine Face we know. He is not the Father we see there. It is not his glory of loving that is made visible there, not his glory of self-giving and self-sharing.

So I am glad to find a Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity saying that the theory of him "makes havoc of the doctrine of the Incarnation." I know it does; and it has made a considerable amount of havoc of the claims of our Christian faith upon the world. A God so far away in heart as this impassible God we cannot offer to a suffering world or call upon it to see in Christ. He is not there. Better no God at all, better worship St. Francis or Pasteur or even Augustus Cæsar than one who, though omniscient and omnipotent, does not care enough about us to have sympathy with us. Better confess a plain Devil on the throne of things than call any such being God and ask men to worship or—irony indeed!—to love him and seek to grow into his likeness that they may "see him as he is." How many unworthy Gods have we grown out of, I wonder. But this, I think, is the unworthiest of all; and it is cheering to note that he has never been worshipped, much less loved. He was made by "theologizers" as an element in a theory; he was never real. And, very suitably, nobody has fancied him real enough to be adored in good earnest. They have adored the divine Son and his Mother and the Saints, instead. Or they have kept him on the study shelf for study use.

None the less, as an element in theological theory, he has worked untold mischief for both the outside and the inside estimate of popular Christianity. "What is God like?" a wounded officer asked his chaplain, Mr. Studdert Kennedy. The chaplain pointed to a crucifix. And the officer said, "I tell you that cross does not help me a bit; it makes things worse. I admire Jesus of Nazareth; I think he was splendid, as my friends at the front are splendid—splendid in their courage, patience, and unbroken spirit. But I asked you not what Jesus *was* like, but what God *is* like, God who willed his death in agony upon the Cross, and who apparently wills the wholesale slaughter in this war. Jesus Christ I know and admire, but what is Almighty God like?"

That chaplain encountered here the Sultan and the impassible God blended into one. He wrote a book called *The Hardest Part*, that is, God's part, the really Christian God's part, in the welter of the world. Some people dislike the book; it is unconventional, even free and easy; but I value it and so do thousands of other Christians. "I don't know or love the Almighty potentate," he says, "my only real God is the suffering Father revealed in the sorrow of Christ." "How near the God Whom Christ revealed comes

at a time like this ; nearer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet, the Father of sorrow and love Who spoke through the crucified Son ! "

He writes too, this chaplain, of " Nature " and its cruelties and imperfections ; and says, truly, that only when a man sees in this nature of many aspects " God suffering and striving as a creative Father Spirit " ; and looks upon all things, whether beautiful and glad or cruel, " as the fruit not only of God's power, but also of God's pain," is it possible for " the love of Nature's God " to grow in his soul. " I can see," he says, " the face of Jesus Christ staring up at me out of the pages of a scientific text-book which tells me the story of the patient, painful progress of a great plan." So can I, so do I, always. Since I came to see Jesus Christ as the Man in whom not only the story of men was told, but the story of all that led up to men and all that surrounds them, I have interpreted every created thing, as well as their Creator, through him.

" All good work is God's work, and all good workers do God's will. They are labouring to make a world." (Labouring with God, I know, who labours with and in them.) " If God does not suffer agony because of war, and if He does not will that men should live at peace, then I

cannot and will not worship Him, I hate Him." . . . "I would gladly die to kill the idea of the Almighty God Who drives men either to cruelty or atheism. This war is no mere national struggle, it is a war between two utterly incompatible Gods."

"Utterly incompatible Gods"—that is my own point too; and whether you blend the Sultan with the cold-hearted God, or leave them separate, the God who is utterly incompatible with either of them and whom no ingenuity can reconcile with either of them is the God of Christ and should be the only God of Christians. In him alone our warm, loving, restless hearts find rest; in his heart the Cross of Christ has been borne from everlasting, and will be borne until his omnipotent love triumphs over all suffering for all sufferers.

If I were inclined to think that the horror of war had driven this chaplain off his Christian balance I should be set right by his telling us that "the Vision of the Suffering God revealed in Jesus Christ" first dawned upon him "in the narrow streets and suffering homes of an English slum." But I am not inclined to think so; I am far too much surprised that other Christian men can believe themselves Christian without that vision.

Is it too much to ask or to hope that before long our Church of England, at least, will face courageously and sincerely the problem of these incompatible Gods, and choose whom it will serve, not only in heart, but in published word ? I do not doubt that the service of the heart goes where it must and is therefore far better than the service of the word. But the cleavage between these and the insincerity imposed by the statements made in churches and outside them by our preachers and teachers are nothing short of disastrous. At all costs—and I think they will be small compared with those we are paying now—let us be sincere, let our public yea be as our private yea, and our public as our private nay.

It is all very well for those who have spent, may be, years of thought in learning to make distinctions in these matters, to trace out the perhaps all but blameless history of insincerities that nevertheless now shock them to the bone ; it is all very well for those who know the fallibility and weakness of human institutions and the difficulty there is in not allowing the sacred letter to check the more sacred Spirit, the useful mechanism to crush down infinitely precious life ; but how about the " poor and simple " who cannot but be deceived and yet, in an age

of books and newspapers and lectures and clubs, are almost sure some day to be violently and recklessly undeceived ? Can any one of ordinary intelligence be surprised that all the Churches are losing, where they have not lost, their hold on these very poor and simple (who are of all ranks) to protect whom insincerity has been kept up, not rarely as a detested duty ? A lecturer in a Theological College said to me gloomily, not long ago, "We are all hedging now." Why cannot we trust Jesus Christ ? Why need we "hedge" ? "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?" You can hear him saying that to pretty nearly every bishop, priest and deacon in the land.

We ought not to allow any of the clearer sighted of these men to be forced or persuaded into an insincerity they abhor ? The causes of this disease of the Church are, as we say of typhus or smallpox, preventible. For heaven's sake, yes, for heaven's sake as well as earth's, let us set about to prevent them. We have driven out from our pulpits the teaching about hell and an everlasting vindictive punishment by an angry God ; we laymen have done that. And it will be our fault if we do not drive out a great deal besides, at least equally (I think more) intolerable. The old teaching of hell had a great

truth in it that was not at first easy to disentangle ; but there is no truth at all in maintaining incompatible Gods once they are seen. It is that fatal thing, the lie in the soul.

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March 17*th*.—A few days ago I was writing, much stirred, about the suffering God. I was perhaps a little unfair to the theological scheme. There is nearly always a religious value to be detected even in the least satisfactory of such schemes. I think there was certainly a real value in that one for the men who first devised it, and had to set their faces against what they called the Patripassian heresy ; and I think, too, that some of the value still persists. We have to guard against a miserable and impotent God ; we have to avoid "hanging heaven with crape." We must preserve its joy, and set glory and victory there where they should be. I allow myself to be sure that the religious intention of our theologians was in this respect right ; though I am equally sure that they chose a wrong means to their end when they gave us the impassible God who "makes havoc of the doctrine of the Incarnation."

We do not arrest the revelation of God in

Christ Jesus at the point where he hung slain upon his Cross; we carry it on through his resurrection and the triumph of his ascension. The Cross itself is triumphant; death and sin, there, are swallowed up in victory.

Indeed, if we look into ourselves, into human life as we live and know it, we see that God become flesh must take up into himself the joys as well as the sorrows of men. "Not a God alone, apart," I wrote in *Faith and Freedom*, "but a God living our lives with us. Not a God who is but victim of and with the world, but one who saves it. This God, in and with us men, Calvary has shown to us, and in the light and gloom of Calvary we may see him everywhere. He is our God with us, and sharing his life we look beyond even Calvary to a fullness in which death is swallowed up in victory and sacrifice is crowned. There we discern, although but dimly, the joy of love, that joy which sacrifice augments even among ourselves, and which in God who is perfect love must be perfect too."

Those words express my theologically unprofessional mind, and perhaps help to account for my delay in trying to do justice to theologians in this matter. My justice amounts, I see, to saying that they meant to do well and that the end they sought was good, though the means

they chose was mischievous by the way. I go as far as to accept what Canon Streeter says after telling us to press home boldly "the principles of St. Paul, St. John, and Athanasius" (which I desire to do) and to recognize that indeed he that has seen Christ Jesus has seen the Father, who is "essentially one with the Son." Then we are able to see God sharing the pain of all his sons, of us as well as of our Elder Brother. After urging this upon us Canon Streeter goes on to say that "orthodox theology was surely right in affirming that, though what we see in Christ is really divine, yet it is not the Godhead in its totality." I accept this, readily. But why was orthodox theology so clumsy and destructive in being right? Why, in its theory-making, did it flout the oneness of the Father with the Son, and set a suffering Son over against an impassible Father?

I turn away from the blundering words that have made the Incarnation fail to win so many of the hearts of men; and for a blessed change I recall what Boehme said (or sang):

"In the light of God (which is called the kingdom of heaven) the sound is wholly soft, pleasant, lovely and pure; yea, as a stillness in comparison with an outward gross speaking and sounding. It is as if the mind did play and

melodize in a kingdom of joy within itself, and did hear in a most entire and inward manner a sweet, pleasing melody and tune; yet outwardly did neither hear nor understand it. For in the divine light all is subtle, in manner as the thoughts play and make mutual melody in one another.

" And yet there is a real, intelligible, distinct sound and speech used by the angels, according to their own property, in the kingdom of glory. The powers of the formed and manifested Word, in their love desire, do introduce themselves according to the property of all the powers, into an external being, where, as in a mansion, they may act their love-play, and so have somewhat wherewith and wherein mutually to play and melodize one with another, in their wrestling sport of love.

" God, who is a Spirit, has by and through his manifestation introduced himself into distinct spirits, which are the voices of his eternal pregnant harmony in the manifested Word of his great kingdom of joy: they are God's instrument, in which his Spirit melodizes in his kingdom of joy; they are angels, the flames of fire and light, in a living, understanding dominion. . . .

" We are all strings in the concert of his joy;

the spirit from his mouth strikes the note and tune of our strings. Therefore God became man, that he might repair his glorious instrument of praise, which would not sound according to the desire of his joy and of his love. He would bring again the true love sound into the strings; he has brought the voice which sounds in his presence again into us; he is become that which I am and has made me that which he is, so I may say that in my humility I am in him his trumpet and the sound of his instrument and his divine voice."

That is better. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," over one string newly brought into the harmony of God. And there is eternal joy in God because love eternally triumphs. But for me this glory is best translated in terms of that human experience in which sacrifice brings joy in proportion to the greatness of its gift of love, a joy unhindered by the soreness of its pain.

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March 25th.—When I look from the earth to the stars that I see with my body's eyes and beyond to those unnumbered stars that only the eyes of my mind can reach, and then tell

myself that, if machine-like power is the only power they express, I know that all their might would be unable to conquer my soul or that of any child of man. Then I worship God with new reverence, because he subdues me and wins me by another power that is indeed omnipotent and always conquers where it is discerned. Both my heart and my mind discern that power, too, beneath and with all others.

No man sees love as it is but is won by it. Any man may resist such power as science discovers in those wheeling stars, power which can be measured in foot-tons that at worst only crush. A man that is a man will always stand up against that sort of power when it is directed against his soul; it rouses what we call the devil, and should call the God, in him. "O the superlative Bounty of God! [This is Traherne.] Where all power seemeth to cease, He proceedeth in goodness. . . . He seemeth to have made as many things depend upon man's liberty, as His own. When all that could be wrought by the use of His own liberty were attained, by man's liberty He attained more. . . . By His own liberty He could but create worlds and give Himself to creatures. . . . But . . . to make them fountains of actions like His own (without which indeed they could

not be glorious) or to enjoy the beauty of their free imitation, this could by no means be, without the liberty of His creatures intervening."

Yet we have thought of God's omnipotence in terms of the sort of power that was only the sum of all conceivable mechanical forces, and could never conquer liberty. We have prayed for that sort of power to be used on our behalf, or we have prayed that it might not be used against us. And all the while we have called ourselves Christians and read, I suppose, the Gospels, yet not remembered that we have never seen or felt or heard of a trace of that in the dealings of Jesus with men. All his power works in love. It is love that gives him power over us. He gives himself, spirit penetrating spirit, and wins our spirits in a return of love. He conquers by the magic beauty of his love; by nothing else. Even his wisdom (if wisdom could be separate from love) and the splendour of his justice would not win us, although either might convict us of our folly and of our sin. We *love* because he first loved us. And we are able to give ourselves to him because he has filled our hearts and minds with the sense of his giving himself to us, with the beauty of his self-giving. So we are won, not otherwise. And so we may win our brother-men, not otherwise.

"The divine omnipotence," Pringle-Pattison says, "consists in the all-compelling power of goodness and love to enlighten the grossest darkness and to melt the hardest heart. 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.'" God, then, is omnipotent; but only because he is inexhaustible, unwearying, most lovely Love. There is no power that can overmaster love; only blindness to it can do that. "No man can sin that clearly seeth the beauty of God's face." We can blind ourselves to love and its beauty, we cannot look upon it and resist it. But we have our divine liberty and we can resist any other kind of power open-eyed. In fact, a power that has any likeness to the forces of material machine-like things is powerless to touch our souls. I wish we would always reckon with this truth of all experience when we talk about the omnipotence of God and complain that he does not do this or that which a Supreme Sultan might, if we cajoled him enough. That is not God's way; his way is Christ's.

How is it we so often forget that God is really to be known in Christ and that he who has seen Christ has seen his Father? How is it that we make a magnified *Jupiter omnipotens regum rex* for our God, whom we cannot possibly see in Christ? And how is it that we forget our

own nature and experience and so fail to see that Jupiter cannot conquer us ?

Perhaps we do not know enough about ourselves. Assuredly we do not know enough about Christ Jesus. I think that if all the preachers and teachers of the Christian religion would make a vow not to say anything about God for five years that they could not see for themselves in or through Jesus, and would with the utmost sincerity say everything they could see, some of us would begin to learn what the Christian religion really is. It would be an extreme measure, I know; but the preachers and teachers would return to the rest of their knowledge with a new understanding of it, and their hearers would be ready to listen as they never listened before.

Three days after last Christmas (I remember this well) there were collections in all our churches for the starving children of Central Europe; and some members of many congregations, who had been keeping the birthday of the Christ-Child, the Saviour and Lover of all the world, refused to give. I heard of one saying, while still inside the church: "Let the little brutes die!" But I have also heard of preachers who taught their congregations to worship, not the Saviour and Lover of all the world, but the

God of Battles who commanded his favoured people to " smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." As is the teacher so are, it seems, the taught. Blind leaders can lead the blind into a ditch. And because we have not yet decided on the God whom we will serve, we have these blind leaders, these teachers and the taught.

The God of Battles is certainly not incarnate in our Lord Jesus Christ, nor is his power one with love. We shall never worship the God and Father of Christ as he is shown in him, until we have utterly cast out our false Gods, our Jupiter, our God of Battles, our Mechanist and all the rest whom Christ does not reveal. None of these can win us, draw us to himself, purify us and conquer our hearts. None can show us the way of peace and eternal life, and of none is his kingdom the true desire of our hearts. But every one strengthens in us the " ape and tiger," the greed and lust and fear and pride that poison life in us. For every one is the mirror of ourselves in some such evil guise. We have made our Gods after our low likeness. It is Christ only who has shown the true God as he is and called us to look upon his likeness.

Can we wonder that clear-eyed men turn away from our false Gods and from a Christianity which, they suppose, sets up their worship? Very many of them do not turn away from Christ. They honour him, like that officer who stirred up Mr. Studdert Kennedy with his questions about God. Through their clear sight they see his splendid courage, and a spirit nothing daunts. Like Shelley, they see, perhaps, a revolutionary of love, "a Promethean conqueror" who would set free the world in an extremity of his self-giving, one not unlike "the stormy and mysterious Personage" of St. Mark's Gospel, a destroyer of all false Gods. Certainly they do not see, as many Christians do, the flimsy sentimentalist of hymns and stained-glass windows, "the conventional Saviour, with the gentle unindividualized face." And if you can only convince them that in him they thus admire they are seeing your God made known in the character that is truly his, the Christian's own God—well, you will surprise them. They have not been taught that Christians really do believe God is like that.

How are we to convince men that we Christians believe in the God who is seen in Jesus Christ? That is the great question for us, after we have learnt to believe in him. There is that

other question to face first: how are we who call ourselves Christians to learn to believe in that God and in him alone, to worship him, to give our hearts and minds and strength to him, and so travel in his only way of life and ours? How are we, in short, to learn to believe in omnipotent love, and listen to Love uttering, giving forth, love?

"The height of love is as high as God"; Boehme says—"it brings thee to be as high as God himself is, by uniting thee with God. Its greatness is as great as God: there is a latitude of heart in love which cannot be expressed; it enlarges the soul as wide as the whole creation of God. This shall be experienced by thee, beyond the compass of all words, when the throne of love shall be set up in thy heart. Its power supports the heavens and upholds the earth; its virtue is the principle of all principles, the virtue of all virtues. It is the worker of all things and a vital energy through all powers natural and supernatural. It is the power of all powers, nothing being able to let or hinder the omnipotence of love, or resist its penetrating might."

Always, always, the splendour, the strength, the winning beauty of love conquers men. They have only to see it: and if a man sees Christ in

his beauty he does see love—love in power, love with perfect justice, with that justice which has eyes.

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April 1st.—A well-known man of letters, one of religious mind, tried to convince me that "the symbolism of the Cross," as he called it, had lost all meaning in the present day. That is, for the day (I must take it) in which he spoke, which was before the war. Whether the war has made any difference in his opinion I do not know. But it has made many a difference elsewhere. Still, I share his opinion if by "the symbolism of the Cross" I am to understand, and the men of the present day are to understand, one attached exclusively to Calvary as an isolated event. Otherwise I do not agree with him.

We have discovered almost in our sleep that our world has not only stretched out far in space and time but has taken on a new wholeness in a continuity of process we have been compelled to recognize. Therefore all the outstanding peaks which mark the range of our religion for us must be seen as what they truly are, signs of a continued base on which they stand, signs showing us where it lies. All the sublime

moments of the revelation of eternal life in the eternal Christ must tell us of its universal extent. So the Cross stretches its arms across the world and through the worlds. We see it in the far-away mists of time and in the deeps of eternity. Calvary is the clear announcement of an eternal truth manifest in part through all time. We discover, at last, the Cross in the heart of the Eternal Father. Just because we are able to see God in Jesus Christ lifted up on Calvary we know the universal significance, power and efficacy of the Cross on which he hung, a "young man crucified."

All the great sayings about the Cross have either taken on a universal sense, or have lost their meaning for many of us. If my friend, the man of letters, has not become convinced of the universal sense, it may well be that in spite of the war he still thinks as he thought before. But I assure myself that thousands are gaining that sense, and with it a symbolism reaching to the uttermost stars, where, may be, or most likely, there is no more knowledge of what God's ways are with us than we have of his with them.

> Nor, in our little day,
> May His devices with the heavens be guessed,
> His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way
> Or His bestowals there be manifest.

> But in the eternities,
> Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
> A million alien Gospels, in what guise
> He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

Here indeed in Mrs. Meynell there is the universal sense; and she is a faithful daughter of Rome. To this extension of the Cross, to a truth embracing the created universe and enshrined in eternity, all Christians and the world must come.

I am reminded now, by Mrs. Meynell, of a son of Rome who wrote of the universal significance of the Cross, but especially of its life and death pertinence for us as we are now. And although he wrote before the war his words are made only the more weighty by it, and by all that has happened and is happening socially and politically in consequence of it. "This is the meaning of Christ Crucified—man agonizing for goodness and truth even unto death, and thereby fulfilling the universal law of God in Nature and in himself. If the mentality of the age is insensible to the older and ruder symbolism of this idea it is perhaps more sensible to the idea itself, for never were men more conscious of the vacuity and senselessness of any other view of life but that which gives value and significance to its sufferings. . . . Hence, instead of Hell-fire, I should

preach the hollowness of the self-life in and out, up and down, till men loathed it and cried: *Quis me liberavit?* and then I should turn to the Christ-life, not only of Christ, but of all Christ-like men, and make its reality, solidity, eternity, stand out stereoscopically."

That might be Donald Hankey, but it isn't. Such men and women are now, I am deeply thankful to say, of every Christian Communion. This next quotation, too, is like Donald Hankey but also unlike him:—"I still think . . . that Christ Crucified is the best and surest Gospel to reawaken a faithless world, or rather a world that has outgrown faith's short-clothes. But instead of beginning with the dogmatic Weltanschauung, and deducing the practical life from faith in that same, let us begin by preaching the Life and winning faith in that Life directly, and only indirectly in the Truth it implies. Then let us unfold these implications, already believed and loved, and show that Life to be a self-conformation to a world of eternal (though mysterious) realities and facts. After all, we know by experience that the mere example of Christ and the Saints, and of the great and good both of history and fiction, draws men to their imitation; and has a suasive force *in se* apart from all the theory implied. Indeed we *believe* doctrines

only because of their bearing on life, and as guiding us how to live. Much more immediately therefore do we *believe* in a life or way."

The Cross, the Life, the Way—can they be preached with the energy and vividness which men once threw into preaching about hell-fire? Can "the worthlessness of self-life" be shown in picture-language as Jesuits and Calvinists, and not only they, used to show the tortures of the damned? And can the life of self-giving, the life which is Christ's, lived in the following of his way, be made to look as attractive, as lovely and delightful, as the joys of heaven, to which it most surely belongs?

We shall need a new order of preachers for this. We are ready for them, I think. The fields are white for their reaping.

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April 3rd—Easter Eve.—Not in telling us men that after death we pass through a gate into some other manner of life does the glory of Easter consist. I can imagine an amount of evidence gathered together strong enough to convince any reasonable man of the brute or the scientific fact. Indeed I have known many reasonable men convinced by the evidence which has

already been amassed. I have known reasonable men convinced, too, by philosophy. But there is certainly no glory revealed to them by any mere rational, sufficiently grounded, opinion they have reached. There is no secret, no mystery, of life revealed, no power shown, no destiny portrayed. Man as he is might go on indefinitely as the man he is; worlds like this might succeed worlds; the immanent process of evolution might go forward indefinitely, bearing us with it into some Utopia of the well-behaved, well-grown, altogether admirable man of earth. What St. Paul would name the merely "psychic" manner of life might never end, might continue through innumerable worlds. Only not to die, except to this earth, does not mean an entrance to eternal life in God.

This is one of the reasons why men of our vigorous and oppressive western nations have so little desire for immortality, such a surprisingly small amount of interest in the matter, such a surprisingly feeble desire not to die. If life is only the continuance of earthly life, if there is no other prospect for us through interminable spheres, then we are most miserable. And the wiser we are the more clearly we see that we are miserable. We desire glory, although we may not know the secret springs of our desire;

and we see, as in the Cave of Shadows, that which we do not really see. Therefore one thing is made known to us—our discontent. There is no glory in mere going on. Worlds like ours, even carried to perfection, are no better than some *limbus* of the soul; unless, in ours and in all, the power of the Highest overshadows all.

To live a million years, a million million years, and still go on, is not glorious; an amoeba, with fair chance, might do the same. The drive of life from amoeba to man, and through the wide expanse of his animal kindred upon earth, touched glory nowhere in its course until it came to man. Then it touched glory, by the spirit that was able to welcome Spirit; but it could not make it manifest. Not by the naturalistic drive of life in man but by the power of the Highest, the brooding of the Spirit over him, the life of God coming to him to be received by the life of God within him, is glory given and made known.

I think yet again of the long history of mankind and of the many ways in which, sunk in our Cave of Shadows, we have sought after the light of God and tried to decipher by it our true selves. I see the Brahmin sick at heart of material goods, longing after the divine knowledge that has no place for vanities and no need of

earthly forms: desiring the knowledge that is intuitive, direct, that penetrates all truth because it is itself all truth. By self-mastery in the intellectual way, by self-devotion in the ceremonial way, by self-sacrifice to an ideal of purity set over him in an iron rule, he would immerse himself in the impersonal divinity over and beyond all worlds, be absorbed in its immensity and *know* perfectly at last, with an unchanging knowledge which is one with his being and with the being of the Whole. Here there is something higher than our reasonable conviction of going on, and higher than the rational manner of going on; but there is no Easter, no joyful resurrection, and no transfiguring of earth and the life of earth.

The Buddhist, too, seeks like the rest. But for him there is less to seek. He has no supreme God; his goal is that he may cease to seek and thus attain divinity and its enlightenment. If he can cease from desire he himself will be divine, for divinity is, above all else, the absence of desire, a godlike calm. He will reach the state of perfection in losing all particularity. And for this he must abandon self and the world; because these, even self, are of the illusion that betrays men into renewed life, and darkens that unchanging light which is beyond all life. Where

is there joy, I ask myself, in this scheme of man's despair? How naked and barren is that enlightenment which shuts out the desire of even the purest heart, the heart that might see God!

For Islam there is the going on of earth and of the earthly man, an after-life which wearies out hope in men of the spirit. A materialistic heaven won by submission to the divine decrees, decrees of an arbitrary fate, and by an unwaveringly systematic orthodoxy well suited to the unwaveringly earthly man, would be hell to those who have caught a glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Even Islam has men who look further, and transfigure its faith by a mystical vision of secrets that it hides. The Sufis are witnesses to spirit and to the glory that must come by spirit; they are witnesses to an Easter they do not know. Everywhere there is desire; everywhere there are shadows of which Easter brings the substance that fulfils. And here, among Christians, for whom yesterday the whole world stood still, silent, waiting at the gate of death, the glory of the Highest and the power of the Highest are not seldom lost sight of and forgotten. Here Easter brings no message to many Christians except the message that over there, beyond that gate of death, there

is another world, a world of Heaven and Hell and Paradise and Purgatory, a world of the *limbus patrum* and the *limbus infantum*, a world that is not eternal but only does not end. And this poor message some of us are satisfied to proffer to men who are capable of God and hunger for his life.

It is not the message of the Man who died on Good Friday, not the message of the Son of God to his perishing brothers; not the Christian Good News. He is no example of an earthly life carried through this world to that; he is the exemplar of eternal life, of the natural world and all its natural life raised up by the Spirit of God, taken into his glory.

* * *

Easter Monday, April 5th.—I remember seeing an account in a newspaper of the many ways in which Londoners might "mitigate the dullness of Easter." All the pleasure-giving resources of civilization were brought to bear on this difficult problem, and even they, it seemed, were overtaxed and must fall short. That is, unless the word *mitigate* is the newspaper equivalent to *overcome*.

Who are these people who have forgotten

Persephone and have not learnt Christ? Who are these whom a great city deprives not only of Spring and its religion, but of the better part of their own life and its highest aspirations? Do we need the face of earth, I wonder, to draw us towards God?

Easter, some say, is a Pagan festival. Good; for it is more. Our Easter is not only of the aspiration and symbolic fancy of men; but of their history and fact. That is one direction in which we leave Paganism behind us. We carry the symbolism of Persephone to a fulfilment beyond its own power: we take myths that are ideal, the stuff of dreams, and show them realized in concrete life. Our Christian myth is built up in living stones.

Again, we bring Paganism to a realization beyond itself, in that the life culminating at Easter is life which God has brought within the range of human effort, by an example and a promise for us all that "in Christ shall all be made alive." There is nothing in Paganism that does not fall far short of this; and yet there is prophecy, longing, and inspiration of the Spirit that fills the world, and goes before men in the way of their desire. Hunger of the heart, desolation of spirit, as well as much else, were vocal in those myths of "the Creed outworn"

that we have abandoned, or rather have transcended and absorbed. And the sense of universal kinship, and of the beauty for ever born anew in all things, was at work, surely, in those men who embodied the drama of the Spring in a drama of heroic life. Our people of the city, for whom Easter is dull, and Spring has no flowers, Demeter no "golden-throated trumpeters" calling them to rejoice once more over the beauty of earth—these people of ours are a problem and a shame.

They have warped and deadened, it seems, the natural man, so that he no longer hears the summons of his kin, feels their blood in his veins; or touches by an inner sense the common life, as the thrill of that life takes possession of the soul. All this is nothing to him. Persephone is nothing to him; as she is not even a fit subject for a revue. We pay dearly for our great cities, our thronging crowds who cannot even make a hero or a god, except perhaps of some champion boxer. The fertile earth is hidden away out of their sight, the strengthening sun brings them no message of a resurrection from the dead. We pay dearly, we who know of these things. How must they pay, who do not?

They would lose much, yet far less, if they were not heathens still, although without the

heathen faith and stir of hope, the vision that expressed itself in myth. If they had the Christian vision and hope and the faith of Easter, their life would be uplifted from the natural plane which they live on now and yet belie. And the rest would be loss, but loss without degradation such as theirs is now. For these men who have no vision, no faith, no hope of eternal life here or elsewhere, are degraded, many not by their own fault, from the due estate of men capable of God. They are capable but frustrate. They have the mind of the natural, the "psychic" man, not the mind of the Lord, whose life is their rightful heritage. And they pervert the natural man, poison him, crush down his natural claims, and silence the voice that would tell him at least something of what he really is.

Happily the Spirit has many ways; and nature has many ways. Happily pain and sorrow, death, the call of need and wretchedness, the call of country, even at times the call of an admiration of true heroes, summon these men, as earth summoned the makers of those resurrection-myths. And they answer, often, as they answered in the Great War. The love of children, sympathy in suffering, the impulse of the Saviour hidden in all men, may bring them near to the resurrection morning. Some day

their eyes will open upon it, and they will behold him whom, having not seen, they yet have loved.

So I hope and believe, for God's ways are not ours, and his arm is not shortened by what we have done. Yet we have done ill, and we shall suffer for it. Our cities and nations and policies have, for some great part of their foundation, the greed that builds up hell and would ruin heaven. Whether we ourselves do or do not share that greed, we must suffer. When any member suffers all members suffer with it; and we are of one body with those men who have neither an Easter nor a Spring.

* * *

April 6th.—The absence of any desire for a share in the one body of religion and worship is the special disease, it has been said, of religion in our day. We set, so we are told, no value on a Church or on its common cultus and its sacramental rites. Yet if the saints and the mystics are able, sometimes, to "live eternal life in the midst of time" without that aid, ordinary men have amply shown that they are not. And for the most part saints and mystics do not try—certainly not for long. As Baron Friedrich von

Hügel says, in his *Eternal Life:* "If man's spirit is awakened by contact with the things of sense, and if his consciousness of the Eternal and Omnipresent is aroused and (in the long run) sustained only by the aid of Happenings in Time and in Space, then the Historical, Institutional, Sacramental must be allowed a necessary position and function in the full religious life." The argument holds good. Even Quakers have their institutional bonds and social religious supports.

Long ago, when my scientific agnosticism had been displaced by something like a panentheism, I went to Benediction at the Brompton Oratory. I remember now the thrill of emotion that came over me when I found myself one of a great gathering, all of whom seemed to be recognizing the union of spirit with matter, worshipping God seen in the little things whereby we live. Yet I knew I was not really one with that gathering. I knew that the words in which I should express my conviction and account for my worship would not be approved by the priest at the altar, and that he would press upon me a whole scheme of religion, or rather of theology, that I could not and probably never would accept.

In this I was not singular. Many a man far

more settled in conviction than I was just then, better established in a sacramental outlook on the world, has been and is being made to feel an alien in the Christian Community, in any Christian Church, in the same way.

It seems to such men a grievous thing that while the indifferent man and the conventional man can easily be of that Community, of any Church, they themselves are treated as heathens and publicans. The bruised reed is often broken, the smoking flax is often quenched. And small matters are allowed sometimes to become matters for exclusion. It was by the help of one of the greater bishops of the English Church, then Bishop of London, that I found at last, when I was both willing and ready to submit to much, an entrance to the Church without sacrificing truth. And I know that there are members of the Church now who would cheerfully expel me for no more than I have shown in these pages. It is not a pleasant thought.

We shall have to wait for the day, but I am pretty sure dawn is breaking. The War has done a great deal for us in showing to the Church its failures and the alienation of the great mass of men. The evidence gathered up in that significant book, *The Army and Religion*, brings accusa-

tions it cannot ignore and, I am glad to be assured, is not ignoring.

We cannot do without a Church. Indifference to it, repudiation of it, are passing phases. Man is incurably religious and as incurably social; and men will inevitably come, through trial and error, to demand the outward and visible sign of spiritual communion between men and God which only a Church can present. "A Christian's belief in the Church is . . . the concentrated expression of his belief in the dependence of human society on God."

You may say that we are far from any such belief or demand on a great scale. It may be so; but at least the trend of our new knowledge is that way, and change goes quickly nowadays. Reformations move at double, treble pace. I believe that if the Church will do for the new knowledge what St. Paul did when he fought the battle of the Gentiles, and what Thomas Aquinas did when he "baptized into Christ" the learning of Aristotle, the world will be astonished by the effect upon multitudes of men and women now either half-hearted members of the Church or outside its bounds.

Has the Body of Christ lost its ancient assimilative power? If it has, it has lost its life. But I do not believe that; I believe it will

arise once again, throw off its fetters, its apathy and fears, and go forth, as it has so often done before, powerful as an army with banners.

* * *

April 8th.—The greatest of Christian symbols is only a piece of bread. Has ever a more perplexing paradox been set before the world? No crown, no glory of jewels and gold, no sword of judgement, no symbol of the lightnings of a throne; nothing hierophantic, imperial, conquering or condemning; nothing rare, or precious, or imperishable; no adamant or deathless asphodel; only the common food that must be renewed from day to day, is grown in any field, ground in any mill, baked and eaten in every cottage and palace by the men and women and children of all nations. This is the sacred universal symbol in Christendom of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes. It is incredible, yet it continues to be true. It cannot mean what it seems to mean in the eyes of those who only look on; or it could not be believed.

For us who believe, it is significant of that which we see with other eyes, and know within our hearts—it signifies universal and incarnate Love in power of life, excluding neither prince

nor peasant, bond nor free, wise nor unwise; seeking out the wanderers and the lost, calling sinners, and all that sorrow and are heavy-laden, to his mighty arms. As his people need bread, so they need love, and so they need him, their Saviour and their life. "This," he says to them all, "This is my body, given for you," and he gives his very self to them by the bread, and by his love, to be as love in themselves and as bread from heaven bringing to them heavenly life. Can we wonder that they worship him? Are they not worshipping God in his plenitude, God given to them that their life may be full and ever more abundant?

It is love that wins the world; it is love that is bread from heaven and brings eternal life into the world. And the great procession of the Church along the ages has failed to win the world, only because it has so often carried on high something other than love, and has tried to conquer something other than the hearts of men.

* * *

April 9th.—Bread and wine; *this* bread and wine—what are they? I ask the men I know, and I have their answers. Let me set those answers down and look at them.

A series of dynamical equations covering not only bread and wine but all things.

Electrons, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, calcium, phosphorus—and so on. Or, some gases, and a pinch of dust.

These do not content me. I cannot keep life going on equations of any kind; nor on electrons. I may feed myself with chemical elements as carefully as I please, and die of starvation. There is something wrong here. Neither bread nor wine *is* for me what these men say. As to *this* bread and wine—

The staff of life; that is better. All bread is the staff of life; and without water, such water as is in that wine, even bread would not avail for life. I must have both, or perish; I need food and drink to keep me alive. Poetic symbolism, then, comes nearer truth than science. It includes more significance for me, more of my experience of the meaning of things, draws closer to life's immeasurable inclusiveness.

If I listen to the poet I shall hear, in his many golden tongues, of marvels hidden in bread and wine, in corn and the clusters of the grape. He will show me their beauty, their strength and joy; the glory of the sun mated with the dark earth and bringing forth its concealed life. He will show me Demeter, Apollo, Dionysus—all

the gods—the lightning shafts of Zeus, rain upon the fields, day and night, seed-time and harvest, earth brought to creative power in man, in the power of his spirit, in his mastery over mind, over body, over all magic of the world of Gods and men. These things and more he will show me in the bread and wine. These and far more ; for I cannot fathom the soul of the poet, or bring his inspiration down to my measure of thought and words.

Yet, small as my measure is, little as I see or can say of what the poet would show, he gives me greater truth than the men of science or of common everyday thought and use. From within me there comes a response to him I cannot find for those others. They do not stir me, call me to life, as he does. They exclude so much—beauty and joy and the deepest wonder ; even life itself and its mystery. I can learn of the truth of bread and wine from the poet better than from men who, for want of his inspired vision, see too little in those simple things, even for me.

But it is plain that I need not abandon science because I accept the poet's deeper truth. Bread embraces within itself for me not only poetry and poets, but the mathematician, the physicist, the chemist, as it includes their truth. When I

look at it I see that everything these men say about it is true, in a place, for a purpose ; above all, for the men. And I see the men themselves, their mind and will, their interest and attention, met together here, in a piece of bread and in the wine, met together and meeting me.

Of course any earthly thing that would support life would serve to unite them and their ways of truth ; but not, for example, a lump of stone. That would of necessity leave out the most important truth of all. So I would have bread, the simplest food, yet of the widest application, as my rallying point of thought—a fitting symbol to my mind of these many ways of thought, these many ways of seeing life and things. Bread and wine might be my centre, where poetry and prose should become one, man and his dwelling-place, the sun and stars, the round world, even the disc of earth and neighbouring Olympus with its Gods. I might be content to be a Pagan poet, or at least a willing disciple of some Pagan poet ; were it not for a greater marvel—were it not for *this* bread and wine.

If I ask another man, of a different mind, if indeed, I ask myself, what is this bread and wine, the answer surpasses even that of the Pagan poet in its inclusion, and in the depth and height of

the mystery to which it points. "*The bread which we eat, does it not represent a fellowship of the body of Christ?*" "This bread is no longer common bread."

"No longer common bread"; yet even common bread contains earth and the fullness thereof, men and the thoughts of men, their symbolizing Gods, the life, the beauty and the marvel of the worlds. What does more than this? What more is there to be done? "*Does it not represent a fellowship of the body of Christ?*" And the answer of the whole Church of Christ to my question is that this bread and this wine, which are no longer common, do represent his Body and his Blood given and communicated to us in our union with our fellows and with him.

We are a long way from earth and the body of earth, our own or his. For his Body and Blood are spiritual not carnal; and our spirits are upheld by that divine food, strengthened for the support of the body of flesh and of the life dependent on our spirit. We have taken into the meaning of bread and wine not only earth and the body, the natural and the sensuous man, scientific men and poets; but religious men and men of the spirit throughout the world and in every age. We have even taken into it God; whose life feeds the life of all his universe. There

is nothing more, nothing left out, nothing that can be added to this symbolic sum of things.

So, and for this reason and on this account, every kind of objection may be brought against our Christian Sacrament. It is linked with all things; and you may choose this link or that as your point of attack. You do choose according to your bias; your choice is, in fact, an accident of your bias, for all possibilities lie open.

We are materialistic, we who believe. Certainly; earth and things earthly are taken up in our belief. We believe as firmly in our bodies as in God, although with a different end in view. But if you mean that because we believe in our bodies and in earth we do not believe in our spirits and in God, you show your bias.

We are superstitious and absurd. Bread is bread, wine is only wine; matter is real, spirit is unreal. We are forgetting *Kraft und Stoff* in our spiritualistic fancies. It is nonsense to say that any bread can be made other than common bread by saying words over it; what magic have words, any words?

Yes; we are certainly superstitious. We add to *Kraft und Stoff* a whole world that transforms them. We take those things that are only

things, and make them vehicles of spirit and life. We discover the true magic of words infused into them by men who dwell in God and in whom God dwells. We see that human life includes all and makes all after its pattern, that the highest life in man permeates the lowest and uplifts it. We have these "over-beliefs"; and we even count men poor who are without them. If this is superstition we are superstitious. But may not our superstition be also truth—greater than yours, including yours?

Other men tell us that our Sacrament of Bread and Wine came to us from Jewish Sacrifices or from Pagan Mysteries, or from further still, and worse. It is true; but what then? Do we desire to shut out any part of the religious life of man, any witness to his aspiration, his need of redemption, his need of God and his longing after him? On the contrary, we would include all; and we rejoice in testimony which may prove to men that we have come not to destroy but to fulfil.

These simple things, this bread and this wine, convey to us God, and all the life of men. We are made partakers in that which saves us from absorption into self, and from the loss that must end in death and loneliness. The divine Spirit is given into us by the Body it informs. We

share the "Fellowship of the Body of Christ," that Fellowship which should be manifest to all the world, not only in symbol and sacrament, but as the kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven."

* * *

April 11*th.*—How is it that the scientific world, in spite of differences and entire freedom to differ, is a real and visible fellowship? I believe that, among men following a great pursuit and moved by a passionate interest, it is the only example which the earth presents. How is it brought about? Why are there national, ecclesiastical, religious, commercial, industrial and social dissensions and antagonisms, while the scientific men of all countries form one body? There is no such thing as an English or French science, or a Liberal or a Conservative science. There is no fury of competition between sciences. Of what other great interests or pursuits can you say the like? And again I ask how it is brought about?

The answer turns out to be plain, easy, deeply significant. The men of the scientific mind have in regard to their sciences, though often enough in regard to nothing else, the spirit and temper of

the child which Christ demands of those who would learn of him the science of eternal life. They have the innocent eye for relevant truths of fact, let their prejudices and passions be what they may in other matters. And they have learnt at last to keep their intelligence frank and free in its dealing with the interpretation of fact. They are humble before their own experience and any other man's experience of the nature they are investigating, if they are humble nowhere else. When they have found what seems a valid law, or interpretation, of twenty relevant facts, and they find a twenty-first for which it is not valid, that law or interpretation has to go. It is displaced either by a new one valid for the twenty-one facts, or by a time of suspended judgement and renewed investigation. Self-interest, in self-constructed hypotheses, is never allowed to stand for long in the way of revising or reconstituting them as occasion demands. The true man of science allows himself no idols. His God is truth. Moreover he has learnt that the scientific Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and that it is to be held sacred only while it serves man, but then tenaciously. Henri Poincaré, declaring that the doctrine of the earth's rotation is not "*vrai*" but only "*commode*," yet replying to his critics, *E pur si*

muove, gave a vivid illustration of the scientific mind. No man *experiences* the rotation of the earth ; and, strictly speaking, nothing that is not experienced is true ; therefore it is not true to say that the earth rotates, it is only convenient. But it is very highly convenient. There are many truths of experience that cannot be interpreted without it ; there is not one relevant truth it does not interpret. Consequently Poincaré says *E pur si muove ;* and every man of science agrees with him.

In the spirit and temper of the child, in the conviction that the " Sabbath " (of whatever kind it may be) is made for man, in personal disinterestedness and devoted interest in truth, in an indomitable hope, men of science are following the way that is Christ's, though with a temporal aim. And they have made by the way the one great fellowship of the world.

In a letter to Charles Kingsley which Huxley wrote and Dr. Glover quotes, he said : " Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth that is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before the fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever end Nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. . . .

I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind, since I have resolved at all risks to do this."

When I think of the contrast between the customs of Christians and the customs of men of science, my heart first sinks within me and then my courage rises. Science, after all, as it is now, is a new thing. Only modern science has this character of faith and hope and charity. It is a new example. I go further, it is a new leaven at work in our meal, working after the fashion of the kingdom of heaven. It is both a new lesson and a new training in the manners of fellowship, and in the divine, the only, way in which true fellowship may be attained. And I believe in its power and its mission for the world and for the Church.

How long, I wonder, will it be possible for men among whom science penetrates, with its frankness, its sincerity of act and speech and heart, to say in church and teach children what they do not believe and have no business to believe? And how long will they be able to make of statements for which they have no adequate foundation, statements which not only are not *vrai* but are not even *commode*, barriers separating them from other religious men?

How long too will it be before the Church

learns, like science, to look out for new truths, to welcome new interpretations, to be ready to respond to a summons coming from without its own bounds? Surely, to be always vigilant, alert to the Spirit's moving either within or without those bounds, is the fitting attitude for the Body of Christ.

I recall something I cut out of *The Times* (I have forgotten when) and I set it down here as a witness both for and against the Church in this great matter :—

"To the Christian disciple and to the Christian Society by direct counsel and by many a parable Christ taught the lesson of vigilance. Alertness, promptitude, daring, adventure, perseverance—these qualities He demanded of His followers.

"But the Church has not been rich in this virtue. It has often slept through its Lord's coming. It has been too late when the hour of crisis came. After the storm is over, the Church interprets its meaning; during the long intervals of quiet between the fierce outbursts of spiritual life, it studies the past, it praises the wise few who were ready; but it does not prepare for the next crisis. It keeps a generation behind in its spiritual history. It imagines that nothing more will happen at all comparable to the past

comings of the Lord. Those ages are for ever past, it believes, when like heated metal the Life ran into new moulds. So it fails to keep its present vigil. Even down to the present time this is true ; after ages will understand the spiritual meaning of this age ; who will say that the Church as one living society was watching and ready when the hour struck in 1914 ?

" The world, as it presents itself to faith, is a place of surprises and wonders unutterable ; at any turn of the road the watchful eye may hit upon some strange glory. The children of the kingdom should have the look of wonder in their eyes, for they are children still and children live amid wonders ; they are always asking questions ; they cannot afford to miss one clue ; they cannot sleep one hour, for He may come at evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning ; He may come along the common and dusty roads of life ; He is always waiting to be detected by vigilant eyes ; and He offers the supreme prize to those who watch ; to them He gives Himself.

" But such a bearing to the future means clearly the policy of an open mind. The watchful Church knows that there is light still to come ; and is ready to welcome the light. The man of science searches the heavens with sleep-

less eyes; he will follow the truth whither it leads him. With the same fearless eyes the Church should search the fields of its own inner world. If the Lord of Truth comes along new ways, He will not find such a Church sleeping; but the noble hosts of science have much to teach the Church. They have kept their vigil; nor have they missed the clue by which they can push back still further the bounds of mystery; and to the heirs of the Christian Faith their devotion to truth brings the same counsel: 'Watch therefore, for ye know not the hour.'"

"Watch"—look for that which comes; do not rest in the past, take it up into the present, let the present and the future both have their part with it, that it may be new every morning with the newness of the divine Spirit at work in all. Can we do this? Can we thus live eternity in time, as science does not? There is a difference between religion and science; can we show it when we have learnt from science? If we do not, what will the world say to us?

* * *

April 12*th*.—The habit of making the word of God of none effect through our tradition is very old and deeply rooted. For the moment, to-day,

I am concerned mainly with the process of getting rid of it which I see going on.

That process is going on very roughly just at present. Some people might call it a *reductio ad absurdum* brought about by the habit itself. There are men bent on making that habit ridiculous by the thoroughness with which they are carrying it into expression. They are doing good work. I remember receiving a post-card from Father Tyrrell on which he had written "Long live Pius X!" Pius X was a thorough-going habit-monger of tradition and so did service to the cause of truth in the Roman Catholic world. The Church of England now has benefactors of the same kind.

Other people might call the rough process of amendment rather a modern substitute for persecution, a trial by which the good metal of religion is being purified from the dross of pretence, conventional acceptance, delusion, lies. It depends where you look. There are habit-mongers; there is a great sifting. But the chief cause of the mischief that is being attacked is, I think, established false opinion about revelation; and I am not sure that the attack, in either or any of its forms, goes to the causal root.

Scientific men in old times made exactly the

mistake that religious men often make now. When certain astronomers refused to look through Galileo's telescope at Jupiter's moons, because if Jupiter had moons there would be more than seven planets, they made the word of God of none effect through their tradition. The "perfect" number; the circle, the "perfect" figure; anything that Aristotle or the Scriptures had laid down; these sufficed to blind them to plain truths of fact. And the very virtues of these men, as well as their vices, combined to sustain tradition and reject truth. Loyalty as well as personal or corporate vested interests worked for the blindness of the *aveugles volontaires;* and for an arrogance often pretending to be the defence of faith. Science itself had to pass through its "bath of purification" before it could seek truth and ensue it as it does now, in the spirit and temper of the child, with cleansed flesh and the innocent eye. Only after that cleansing did it learn to distinguish between what is true as matter of experience and what is valid as means of interpreting, or between this latter and what is invalid.

Religious men as a body have still to learn that lesson and carry out its consequences. The "original or birth sin" of theology is said to be its making fact conform to theory, not theory to

fact. Consequently religious man is all too often made for the theologian's Sabbaths, not those Sabbaths for religious man.

But it is the facts, the truths of religious life, that are revealed ; the theological interpretation of them is not. That is the work of the reflective mind upon the facts. The parallel with science seems to me exact. Science has its interpretations, its laws, its schemes, hypotheses and theories. But it has learnt to refuse them worship. It has learnt that they are not revealed truth, like the facts of our experience of nature ; and that it is only revealed truth to which men must be absolutely submissive, to which they must pay unwavering honour. Religion too has its manners and degrees of interpretation, the work of the reflective mind embodied as its theology. And a theological doctrine may be taken as comparable with a scientific " law " or with a theory ; or with this or that hypothesis of different degrees of probability. It may be valid, " *commode,*" but it is not in any of its varieties a revealed truth. It may be worthy of very great respect ; it may be as valid and as valuable as the scientific statement of the rotation of the earth ; but it did not come to us from any Sinai as divine writing on tables of stone. We wrote it ourselves, no doubt by

power given us, but in our own fallible way. And if we are inclined, sometimes, to call a law or doctrine, either of science or of theology, "self-evident," let us remind ourselves that we are only citing a subconscious generalization from a number of experiences, which we have summed up in a scheme. There may be other and relevant experiences, which cannot be summed up thus and would destroy our generalization and its "self-evidence" at a stroke. For these we should always, and humbly, be on the watch.

God reveals to us facts of "spirit and life," truths of spiritual experience. He does not reveal either our own or theological interpretations of them any more than scientific interpretations of other facts. A law of science and an established doctrine of theology seem to me to stand on the same footing; and the footing is not by due prescription always safe. Indeed, as a matter of present fact, many of the doctrines of theology are very unsafe; because they have not yet passed through the searching trials to which the laws, theories and hypotheses of science have so far been exposed and which many of them have so far survived.

What we need is a new spirit and a new temper in these affairs of religion; precisely

those characters by which science has won its way to our unfaltering trust. It seems a pity that we cannot learn to seek that spirit and that temper without being forced towards trying them, as we are being forced now by the failure of everything else. But such has always been a good deal of the way of our education. We seem to be dull-witted sons of God ; but we are very young as yet, very new in life. It is not many years—as years count in secular affairs—since we were climbing about in trees.

* * *

April 14th.—I think of the many things Christ Jesus did not teach either his disciples or the multitude who for the brief time of his popularity followed him. He did not teach them that the world was not made in six days or that the Sabbath had nothing to do with a day's rest for God. He left them believing that David wrote all the psalms going by his name ; he seemed to share their opinion. He also seemed to believe that certain epileptics and hysterics were possessed of devils ; at all events he did not correct the common mistake of the time about them.

But here I pause and ask myself whether even if he would he could have corrected those mis-

takes. Is it possible to drive information into men who are not ready for it? And would it have been of any use to tell them which among the psalms David had not written or to teach them to diagnose epilepsy and hysteria? Further, would it have been of any use for Jesus to know about those things himself, seeing what his mission to wayward and sinful men really was? And I answer "No" to all those questions. True knowledge is a whole that grows as a whole, and men make no good use of disconnected facts that cannot be fitted into the integrity of their minds. Unless those facts either cast light on the general content of the mind or are lighted by it and therefore welcome, they may just as well not be confessed.

Jesus may indeed have shared the ignorance and the beliefs of his brothers concerning such matters. I think he did. But neither ignorance nor erroneous beliefs in regard to history or science could hinder his great mission, or impair in the very least his power to reveal man as he should be and God as he is. Those days in Palestine were of the fullness of time for that supreme revelation. The men of Palestine were as well able to perceive Love and Wisdom incarnate as we are or our descendants will be, and it was Love and Wisdom incarnate, with

their message and their eternal promise, that Christ then offered for men's discovery. Only humility and good will were needed, then as now, for that.

For me it is true, as some one said, that "these very 'limitations,' as we call them, of the earthly life immensely increase the spiritual force of the appeal of Christ." That he shared the intellectual ignorance of his fellow-men does but enhance the splendour of his spiritual eminence over them. Besides, in that obvious triumph of eternal over temporal values, of wisdom over mere *scientiae*, as Swedenborg calls them, he sets for ever the key of all our valuation of human attainment. Men of ample good will and humility, men of the loftiest spiritual vision, may be almost impervious to truths of the order of science, only because they come as alien elements asking to be placed where no place is felt to be empty and ready for them. In regard to the eternal life of men, that highest order of their life with which Christ Jesus was abidingly concerned, these truths of another order are all but unimportant. That is to say, their chief importance lies in the spiritual reaction they provoke. And the only important spiritual reaction they can provoke depends on a man's ability and opportunity to see them as

they truly are, and to reject or receive them, conscious of what he does.

It would have been worse than useless then for any Jew to be told the truth about David's psalms; either he could not have taken it in or it would have destroyed his intellectual integrity. But it was not useless to tell him that although certain rules of conduct had been laid down by Moses and were supported by that great traditional authority, yet a new authority of truth made manifest was able to say something different by which Moses stood corrected. What that new authority declared, what living truth declared, could meet and in certain cases did meet with a vital response.

I think of the cave-men in the Valley of the Vézère, and I do not see them capable like those Jews of discovering incarnate Wisdom and Love displayed by God in man. I see them capable of perceiving only a mere glimmering of either in the claims of incipient family life. And I remember the great and pathetically unsuccessful Pharaoh Akhenaton, worshipper of one God in a polytheistic world, husband of one wife and doing her public and scandalizing honour, friend of captives and slaves, enemy of war and of oppression, a poet of the soul and God and a

lover of the natural beauty for which his people had no eyes, teaching nothing and leaving behind him no trace of his enlightening. Practical persons now speak of him as the fanatic Pharaoh who failed to sustain the imperial policy of Egypt and nearly brought her to ruin—which is true. Contemporary practical persons, as soon as he was dead, repudiated his principles and his God, and took suitable vengeance on his sacred mummy for his attempt to lead them in ways of eternal life. If he had not been Pharaoh, if he had been a carpenter, they would have taken vengeance earlier, no doubt. "Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

There must be a fullness of time before either eternal truth or the truths of mere *scientiae* can be received by men. So the revelation of God and the concurrent discovery of him grow as time goes on, in the real time men always live through the passing "clock-time." Age after age men have believed to their loss that perfect knowledge had been won—knowledge of God and of created things. But now, I think, there has come a new fullness of time and a revelation

about revelations and discoveries, and so about the ways of the Spirit of Wisdom with men. St. John saw it coming—"I have yet many things to say unto you."

A gradual, a very slow, process, a continuity with the emergence of real differences of which, I do not doubt, this earth will never see the end, either for our race or in any one man—this is the process of the revelation of God in Christ as we discover it. There is many a real difference still to come, and many a conflict, I am sure, about its coming; many a new fullness of time. But I allow myself to think that our own fullness of time is a very great matter indeed. I would say that it is bringing us into a new experience of the living work of the Spirit of Christ, and a new distrust of our traditional theorizing about it. We are learning how well able we are to invent falsity and distort truth. We are discovering the idols we have made not with our hands but with our minds. We are finding out how often we have taken those images of sacred things for reality itself.

* * *

April 16*th.*—Why was our Lord Jesus for ever talking passionately about the kingdom of

heaven, exhausting figure and parable in the effort to tell men what it is and their need of it? Why does St. John translate that language about the kingdom into a language of eternal (that is, divine) life and love and light in the eternal Christ manifest in Jesus, and through him proffered to all men? Because these two, the kingdom of heaven, and the gift of God "which is eternal life," are the same, and without their vital reality man's life is vain, cut short, empty, made desolate. God, the most real Life, given to man, to any man who will receive him, the Life of God come to men, Spirit to spirit, in order that men may become Gods, as Athanasius bravely puts it—this is the Gospel, the Good News of the kingdom of God in men and around them.

All the rest is dream-stuff compared with that. And Jesus says so: "He that saveth his life shall lose it"; the kingdom of heaven is like "treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Repent then, change your minds, become as little children, begin all over again; seek, give away, forsake, that you may buy that treasure.

I observe what has happened to science since

it changed its mind and began all over again as often as there was need ; I have seen the treasure it has amassed. Scientific treasure has its own reality and must be sought as reality demands to be sought. The principle of seeking and finding all real treasure is the same ; a man must submit and give, if he is to receive.

After all, that is what we should expect. Everything real in its degree partakes of God and makes some part of his demand on us. But it is only when we come to understand, and still more to feel, the demands of persons, that we begin to understand and feel much of the demand of God. Then we begin to see the magnitude of the demand he makes upon us in order that we may be able to receive from him the continuance and the uplifting of our natural life in his, the fulfilling of our destiny. Then we see, or may see, why Jesus is so insistent about the kingdom of heaven and the one way to it ; and is so neglectful of the authorship of psalms and the diagnosis of diseases ; and of other things that often seem to us even more important, such as the doctrine of himself which the Church calls Christology.

" Hilaire Bourdon " says wisely that the faith the Church holds as its religious treasure is not an intellectual system, not, that is, a theology,

nor even a history of facts; it is "the highest life of the soul." It is a "truth or trueness of the will to God, as of the needle to the Pole, the trueness of man to his deepest nature and highest destiny, the trueness of him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, through whom alone men can come to the Father. 'This is the Catholic Faith which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved'; for to believe in a *way* is to walk in it; to believe in a *life* is to live it; to believe in Christ is to appropriate his Spirit and be filled with it. Christ therefore, rather than Christology, is what has been committed to the Church to keep and to impose upon men—a living spirit, rather than a system of ideas." And Christ in us—God the most real—is the kingdom of heaven in us and embracing us.

* * *

April 17th.—"Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expand, as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance." So Goethe, after long experience.

I would read "Christ" for Christianity; and

I should carry his "grandeur," may be, farther than Goethe carries it. If I were able I would carry it as far as St. John did. Unless I can see in Jesus of Nazareth the eternal Christ, the creative Word of God, and so link him with the mere jelly-specks from which we all have sprung, I cannot connect his life with mine. I cannot otherwise relate the One with the Many except by some intellectual trick I can easily see through. I have seen his glory and it fills the world.

So it follows for me that as Christ is the world's glory, that glory to which it shall come, he is the world's way, and truth and life, the world's secret and at last its revealing.

In the lower limits of creation it is not really God whom we perceive; it is life come forth from him to do its own work, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, sometimes rising, at others falling. Yet God is with it always or it could not be sustained. He is with the life he gives away. But in man he is not only with that given and sustained life, side by side, as it were; he is there (again as it were) face to face. He looks into eyes where he seeks recognition, his heart calls for hearts that shall respond. Here on earth our eyes see, even the best of us, "as in a mirror darkly"; and yet it is true that

compared with those living orders through which our life passed before it came to be owned by us in personal possession and awareness, our order now stands, figuratively yet really, face to face with God.

So it is that we can look back on our long history and discover him throughout, in the rising tide of life that overflowed all lower limits to reach ours. Creation becomes in some degree intelligible when personal life, however undeveloped, is reached; if growing personal life is used as a clue to it. Looking on the world as a whole from above downward, and foreshortening its history, we can see that plainly. Man is the clue to the amoeba; the amoeba is no clue to man.

We are able to see, too, that life is not likely to be exhausted or made complete by our attainment here, or by the order of our purely earthly and temporal fashion of living. Its work in us would be stultified by that. "I am come," the inexhaustible Christ says, "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." And he does not mean the animal life, or human life on a superior but still animal plane. He means to introduce within us an exalted order, as much, we may say, above the human animal order as that is above the order

of the jelly-speck, perhaps more. The issue is clear : shall we admit him into our lives, confide ourselves to him, look to him as Master of our lives, and so begin to live eternal life in the midst of time ? Or shall we not ?

True, we are often quite unaware of any such fatal decision to be made ; yet we make it. Life does not stand still for us because we are ignorant of its issues, or are careless of them ; and we may be borne upon its upward stream, aware or unaware. Or we may be either fighting against it or lying stranded on its banks ; also, perhaps, unaware. Of one thing, however, we may be sure : unless life is carrying us on, it is dying within us. And we are able to know what it is doing if we choose.

So it is with the Church of Christ, just as with the men who should be his. We can say, as we look at it, " Here it is alive in Christ and shows his vital Spirit ; here it is parted from him and its spirit is that of self-guarding, self-seeking and death." And the Church, too, is able to know what is happening in it, if it chooses to know. If it elects to be *aveugle volontaire*—but it cannot do that, it never has done that, for long.

* * *

April 19*th*.—To-day, thinking of the Church I am reminded of the "Koinonia," the fellowship of early Christians which came of the Pentecostal inflowing of the Spirit of God. And, naturally, I turn from that brief glow of enthusiastic love to God and the brethren, a very poetry of souls, to the process of transmuting through which it passed, you may say, into the prose of an instituted Church.

It is useless to look enviously now on a scene that can never be revived, beautiful though it was. The flowing life of the Koinonia affords no pattern we can set ourselves to follow. It had no pattern. We are not a select band, newly inspired with a supreme ideal, on fire with love, and bound together not only by love but by the pressure of an uncongenial world. Our world is not interested in us, but we are more interested in it than the early Christians were in theirs except as a mission field; and we find it not wholly uncongenial, not as uncongenial, usually, as we ought to find the worldly world. We are also too widely differing and too numerous and scattered to make a company in which every man is every other man's close friend. Besides, the early enthusiasm of a spiritual movement changes. Once a body for it is instituted, the vital movement either becomes confined and

checked or ceases ; and fervour is either in some degree cooled or is exhausted. Organization had to be, in those days. The Koinonia could not be maintained in the rapidly growing Christian world. So the Christian Fellowship merged into the Christian Church ; and the dependence of its members on continued individual inspiration was in great part gradually replaced by a body of doctrine communicable to all. "As feeling cools doctrine is deposited like crystals." And crystals may be passed from hand to hand.

Much was lost when for the bond of love bonds of institutional custom, law, deductive reasoning, authority and obedience were substituted ; though much also was gained. Men must reflect, they must have doctrine, because they are thinking beings. They must organize their common religious life because they are social beings. But whereas the Spirit strives always to carry us beyond the letter of any law, our minds tend to seek in vain through worship of the letter a short-cut to life in the Spirit. Nothing but the Spirit's fervour communicated to us keeps us safe from that deception of the short-cut. Our native laziness and selfishness make us long for it. And this psychological fact of experience has left its mark throughout the history of the Church.

"If we place ourselves at about the year 200, about a hundred or a hundred and twenty years after the apostolic age . . . what kind of a spectacle does the Christian religion offer?

"We see a great ecclesiastical and political community, and side by side with it numerous 'sects' calling themselves Christian, but denied the name and bitterly opposed. . . . All its tenets are of the widest significance; and together they embrace a profusion of metaphysical, cosmological, and historical problems, give them definite answers, and supply particulars of man's development from the creation up to its future form of existence. . . . The living faith seems to be transformed into a creed to be believed; devotion to Christ, into Christology; prophecy, into technical exegesis and theological learning; the ministers of the Spirit, into clerics; the brothers, into laymen in a state of tutelage; . . . the 'Spirit' becomes law and compulsion. At the same time individual Christians are in full touch with the life of the world, and the burning question is, In how much of this life may I take part without losing my position as a Christian?"

Thus Harnack writes, with his acquired prepossessions showing through. But who dares deny the substantial accuracy of what he says?

We have to recognize, as "Hilaire Bourdon" has pointed out, that the Church as an organized institution was no more made on the day of Pentecost by divine *Fiat*, than the world was made in the six days of Genesis by a similar *Fiat*. The Church, like the world, grew by creative evolution, and we may see God and nature working in the creation of both.

"Had the Church," Harnack says, "at the beginning of the third century been asked in tones of reproach, 'How could you recede so far from where you began? to what have you come?' it might have answered: 'Yes, it is to this that I have come. I have been obliged to discard much and admit much; I have had to fight—my body is full of scars, and my clothes are covered with dust; but I have won my battles and built my house; I have beaten back polytheism; I have disabled and almost annihilated that monstrous abortion, political religion; I have resisted the enticements of a subtle religious philosophy, and victoriously encountered it with God the Almighty Creator of all things; lastly, I have reared a great building, a fortress with towers and bulwarks, where I guard my treasure and protect the weak.' This is the answer which the Church might have given, and truthfully given."

Was not God working with men in this, striving, doubtless, with them too ? It was a great spiritual as well as an institutional, an intellectual, and a moral achievement—let us remember that. But we have paid a heavy price for it, because the faults which accompanied and furthered it were perpetuated with it. The Western Church, by the means so triumphantly used, succeeded to the political eminence of the Roman Empire. The Pope, King and Pontifex Maximus, ascended the throne of the Caesars, and, as Harnack says, the words "*Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus triumphat*" came to take on a political sense. The rule of the Church seated at Rome became one of law, rationalistic reasoning, and authoritative force ; not of love, liberty, and that "drawing" of which Jesus Christ is master.

In the records of history we find skeletons of dead religions, traces of religious experiments that have failed, as in the geological record we find the skeletons of creatures that have altogether died out, experiments life did not continue. The huge Dinosaurs, with their unwieldy bodies and their paltry brains, have their parallels in the religious history of men. Where are the vast experiments in religion that Babylonia

made ? Their remains are buried in the Jewish Scriptures—that is practically all. Where are the Olympian Deities—except for poets, the natural custodians of the relics of dead Gods ? There is a law in these matters, I am sure. There is continuity and there are differences ; and some of the religious differences that emerge perish like the Dinosaurs ; some go on, changing creatively as they go, as the creatures did whose races are continued in our own, and whose vital habits we share in one degree or another as our biological inheritance.

What shall I say about the greatest religious experiment the world has ever known, the most vital, the most inclusive, the farthest reaching, the profoundest ? What shall I say of the Christian Church when I think of the dead religions of the past and the dying religions of the present ?

I have been very seriously considering these questions, which are burning among Christians just now. (That in itself is an encouragement to hope, let me say in passing.) Both resolve themselves into another. Is the state of the Church of a kind to obstruct the current of spiritual and religious life as the unwieldiness of some beasts and the protective armour of others obstructed the current of animal life ? Or is it ready to pass

into the next real difference in the continuity of life that shall lift it up closer to its Lord ?

The parallel between the biological and spiritual manners of life gives a sort of line of direction to my mind as I consider these questions.

Undoubtedly the Church is both unwieldy and wanting in flexibility. " He goeth back that continueth not." And because the Church has not continued in the flexibility of the first Fellowship and its ready receptiveness of inspiration, it has often gone back. There is no standing still for an association of live men, any more than there is for the live men themselves. Life, unquestionably, is always moving. But the Church has often tried to stand still. From lofty motives sometimes ; from very base ones sometimes Rosmini's *Five Wounds of the Church* is bitter reading. And when I say Church I include every mode of the Church, although I naturally think most often in this connexion of that of a good half or more (I think it is) of the Christians of the world. That Church shows now, more clearly than any, the result of putting on a carapace of defensive armour. In this respect it invites disaster. Will disaster come ? There are signs of it ; but there have been signs before and they have passed. Yet the signs now are many and

easily seen. Will they too pass ? Will the great Church recover the ground it has already lost in France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain ? Can it arrest the increase of loss ?

There is an inevitableness about the advance of scientific knowledge in the civilized world that bodes ill for any power that sets itself against it. And in spite of the protests of Rome that science is not being interfered with, we can see that it is usually only physical science that is free, and sometimes a cautious biology. Historical science is not free ; it is opposed. Literary criticism is opposed. And this because both a scientific history and the critical examination of documents are fatal to the present claims of Rome. If we could look forward a hundred years, what should we see at Rome ? If we could look forward five hundred, I for one have no doubt whatever that we should see those claims no more. And their abandonment may come far more swiftly than past history would bid us hope. The Spirit of Christ has great reserves of power and pleading. The Saints and the Prophets of the Church are not at an end of their resources ; and they will have successors. Harnack says that Rome has produced saints in all ages, " so far as men can be so-called," and it is producing them to-day. " Ecclesiasticism

has not availed to suppress the power of the Gospel, which, in spite of the frightful weight that it has to carry, makes its way again and again." In Germany and elsewhere, he goes on, the Roman Church " has proved that it not only carries grains of gold, but that they are bound up with it and have been further developed in it."

I fear that freedom for the Gospel, and for the Spirit that communicates new life, has not increased at Rome since Harnack wrote ; and therefore I fear that it has decreased. Yet we must not forget that there are principles of freedom and of an open door for recognized inspiration that are official and sometimes officially acknowledged there. It was the great ruler, Innocent III, who pronounced definitely in favour of the supremacy of conscience over ecclesiastical authority ; and his pronouncement is embodied in the Decretals. He said that if a Christian is sure in his own mind that to do or leave undone this or that would be a deadly sin, he must even put up with being excommunicated rather than yield to condemnation by authority ; for the Church may condemn where God approves. And this is an established principle of the Church, not the *obiter dictum* of any one man, even though he was Pope.

All depends, it seems to me, on a new and practical recognition of the constant presence and constant working of the Spirit, both outside and inside the Church, and of the equally constant errors, especially self-guarding errors, of men, whether as individuals or in a body. If these things are honestly confessed and acted upon, the next real difference of religious advance, the next rise in order for the Church of Christ in general may be at hand. And that again means a new Pentecost in a new fullness of time. We cannot do without the Church; religious man finds himself stunted in growth, narrowed in outlook, liable to crazes and delusions, unless he is one of a true fellowship. It is a law of our being that we are nothing of ourselves and by ourselves, but grow to be something only by the interplay of social life. And the more we recognize the failure of the Church the more acutely we realize our need of a new Pentecostal permeation of it by the Spirit of Christ.

There will be many trials for us all before we have made ready for so great a gift. The Church of England will have to suffer not only for the sins and ignorances of the rest but for its own. We have our superstitions, our false Gods; there are in us insincerities, there are lies, around all of which affections and hope and faith have

gathered. We shall have to bear our part in the penalty the whole Church must pay for officially entertaining these things, for the abiding lies in its ecclesiastical soul—a penalty, perhaps of darkness and weariness, of doubt and feebleness. "This," Father Tyrrell said, "is the natural penalty of lying, that the road back to Truth leads through a weary desert of ignorance and uncertainty. We must be houseless in the interval between the pulling-down and the building up. If man crucifies Truth, Truth must crucify man—*magna est et praevalebit.* But *in cruce salus*, only through that crucifixion can man be saved and reach the Truth—*per crucem ad lucem.*"

Perhaps we should not use such poignant language as he did, for in our Church we have no such poignant experience. But we shall not wholly escape what he foresaw for Rome.

* * *

April 20th.—We look to the growth of fellowship among us as that which shall bear telling witness to the kingdom of heaven, the divine reality in men that Jesus showed and taught. Nothing else will serve that sovran purpose of the Lord, and every advance in fellowship is a

step in its fulfilling. Union among men, true spiritual union, is the outward expression of their union with God in Christ and of their elevation to the rank of eternal life. It shows divine love and divine life become their own.

We have a right to look to the Church to alter its ways, to lead us into fellowship and teach us the power and the beautiful arts of love. That way lies our salvation. Again, nothing else, nothing less, will serve. Salvation is of love, because God is love. Individual men find the beginnings of their salvation in God, but it is maimed and stunted without the salvation of their fellow-men. Christ, it is said, though perfect is not complete until all men share him, until every living soul of man says "Not I, but he liveth in me." So it is no wonder that salvation now is both incomplete and imperfect, for every one of us who have found it. I suppose that, like Christ, it will be complete only when all are completed.

However this may be, the great truth to be considered by us now is that without union with other men we cannot be one with God. No doubt there may be and is and always has been a hidden union of spirits far wider and closer than any of which we are consciously aware. But there must be something else too, or at least

we must be straining always after something else, if the kingdom of God is to be manifest among us. There have been attempts to identify the Catholic Church with the kingdom of God. Facts have made them abortive. Either you must degrade the kingdom into one of this world, or you must ignore facts, if that attempt is to be successful. And you cannot do either, long.

The Christian Church is not the kingdom of God in earth "as it is in heaven." But I am persuaded by that prayer that it may be; though my pen falters as I write down the words —it seems now so unlike. Nevertheless it may. That prayer means and promotes a coming of God, however slow.

The greatest apostacy of the Church (it has been said) is its ceasing to look for that coming here, and its abandonment of the prospect of the kingdom to another world. To that disastrous change we may attribute a large part of its easy acquiescence in things as they are, socially, morally, religiously and theologically; and its tolerance of invasion by the aims and habits of the worldly world.

"There are Christians that place and desire all their happiness in another life, and there is another sort of Christians that desire happiness

in this. . . . Not the vain happiness of this world, falsely called happiness, truly vain : but the real joy and glory of the blessed, which consisteth in the enjoyment of the whole world in communion with God ; not this only, but the invisible and eternal, which they earnestly covet to enjoy immediately : for which reason they daily pray *Thy Kingdom come*, and travel towards it by learning Wisdom as fast as they can. Whether the first sort be Christians indeed, look you to that. They have much to say for themselves. Yet certainly they that put off felicity with long delays are to be much suspected. For it is against the nature of love and desire to defer. Nor can any reason be given why they should desire that last, and not now. If they say because God hath commanded them, that is false : for He offereth it now, now they are commanded to have their conversation in Heaven, now they may be full of joy and full of glory. *Ye are not straitened in me, but in your own bowels.* Those Christians that can defer their felicity may be contented with their ignorance."

There is no hesitation about this man. We know perfectly well what he means when he asks us to " look to it " whether these Christians are Christians. But the Church, in abandoning to heaven the kingdom it prays for in earth, has

made room for them. It has set its goal so far away that eagerness to reach it of necessity dies down. "Let us obey the Church by all means," some Churchmen say, "let us keep its rules and use its rites, let us accept and defend its Creed and its dogmas: but let us do nothing so quixotic and fanatical as to work for the coming here in earth of the heavenly kingdom, although we pray for it. We will maintain the authorized and authoritative *status quo;* the rest is every man's private affair; and the net of the Church holds bad and good. Besides, we are surrounded by men with whom we cannot share communion; we must defend our citadel. They may be Christians, but they are not our fellow-Churchmen. Who can guarantee either the integrity of our Church or the faith once delivered to the saints, if we open our guarding gates?"

So Christ is divided in the division of Christians, and is made unwelcome in the world.

I have no immediately practical suggestions to make, for that is not my business or according to my knowledge. It seems to me that if Christ's Spirit were victorious within the Church no man would ever be afraid that the things of God could be conquered by things not of God coming from without. Practical difficulties would melt

away in a fervour of new life. Christians would awake, as it were, from a bad dream and wonder how they could ever have thought it true. "Christianity is the universal destiny of mankind in the same way that civilization or liberty or knowledge is its universal destiny." But it is this in no exclusive sense, only "as the fullest embodiment of that Spirit of Christ which is striving for utterance through all religions, however uncouth or barbarous." We must learn to present it thus officially to the world, according to the mind of Christ.

> "For love doth use us for a sound of song,
> And Love's meaning our life wields,
> Making our souls like syllables to throng
> His tunes of exultation."

* * *

April 21st.—Christus venit semper; he comes, he remains; and we return to him, finding in him the God without whom we are ever restless, receiving in and through him the divine Spirit that transfigures our spirits to his likeness.

There is a change in many of our thinkers that both marks and foreshadows a return to Christ. Just as the thinkers of the characteristic period of the nineteenth century marked a revolt against

the Christian religion among them, and foreshadowed the revolt of the populace that we see now, so (I tell myself to my comfort) the thinkers of this day show and will hasten the inevitable return. I am confirmed in this opinion by something I have just read in *A Fragment on the Human Mind* by that acute and learned writer, John Theodore Merz, which I shall allow myself to quote here. After noticing that "all beginnings of social and moral order, as likewise its restoration when seriously endangered, can be traced to the rise and influence of great Personalities," he goes on to say that "more than any other event in history have the simple yet mysterious beginnings of the Christian dispensation succeeded in raising to the high level of a great Reality those ideals of a moral and spiritual life which in many varied forms appeared in the pre-Christian civilizations without being able to establish themselves as a great world-power."

"The whole of modern History," he continues, "has been influenced by the dominating force of this great structure of Christian thought and Christian life. It was subjected to the most virulent attacks in the earlier centuries of our era, and to relentless criticism in more recent times; it has not fallen; but steadily gained ground. It has been misused and perverted as

an instrument for gaining and extending purely worldly interests ; it has not lost its inherent and fundamental Spirituality. . . . It has been denounced as antiquated and superseded : it has always reasserted itself again."

There is indeed something in the Christian religion which endures, holding its own against both internal perversion and external attack. " The gates of hell " do not prevail against it, nor does treachery undo it. And Merz has noted, in his profound and wide-ranging survey of human thought, that although in science and philosophy change, through the increase of knowledge, is always taking place, yet, as he says, " this change and development does not seem to apply in the same way to moral and religious questions. Notably " [he emphasizes], " the Christian doctrine has not changed in the course of its life from the simple statements and injunctions contained in its original records. Its history shows a repeated return to these original, doctrinal and historical statements, and it is only in their application to practical purposes that a greater realization is demanded and possible."

Obviously Merz means, by the " simple statements and injunctions " contained in the Gospel, the Gospel data on which theologians reflect,

and from which they derive some part of their doctrine ; he does not mean that doctrine itself. These " original, doctrinal and historical statements," and " simple statements and injunctions " are very different from the complicated teaching of the Schools, and are permanent treasures of the whole Christian Church. We never pass beyond them, but we are always learning to realize them more fully in their meaning for us and their application to our lives. We never fathom their depth or exhaust their pertinence. Jesus Christ endures there, a lasting figure in history. We can see him through the eyes of his followers, watch his impress being stamped on them, discover what he made them to become.

" I am the Way," he says. It is altogether wonderful, this Christian Way, as we study it in our records and know it in ourselves. Its secret is Love, the Love God is. And love is not only the way of our salvation but the physician for all our diseases, the healer of our wounds. There is no other. " Nothing better," Merz says, " has been said on this subject of the supreme rule of life than has been said in the Gospel of Love."

We must return to that Gospel and study it afresh, always afresh. And we must welcome every sign of the return, even when men do not

know they are giving it. When we hear some of them say that men need, or of necessity must have, industrial coöperation and a League of brotherhood among nations; and others saying that we need a new Fellowship in the Church that shall expand the principle of the Koinonia of the first followers of Christ, we must tell ourselves that they are awaking to the sense of their failure without him. Blindly and foolishly experimental in self-seeking, they have tried one way after another and have found that each led to more or less of ruin; that none proved itself a way of more and better life; in short, that he who would save his life must lose it. When the loss was "only," as some of the experimenters might say, spiritual, they might ignore it, drowning spiritual care in the strong drink of material prosperity; but now that the loss is material, now that prosperity is everywhere threatened and in many places destroyed, and war of all varieties stands convicted even at the bar of prudence, there is a new witness to the true meaning of life, a new schoolmaster leading men to reconsider Christ. At least we can say that the doctrines of Antichrist have been discredited by their practical results. The fruits of an evil tree have declared its quality.

I wonder how all this will work out. It is not

possible to believe in the discovery of Christ and in a welcome given to his searching Spirit, merely because both are profitable. No man is able to save life and win life in Christ from motives of self-interest. The way of the eternal life that Christ is and gives is no broad road of common sense and an enlightened self-interest. Self-interest is always dull and blind. It is also in its dull, blind manner, inventive for self alone ; and its roads, even when they are new and seem to be made to the pattern of those in the kingdom of heaven, are not heavenly roads. There are many ways of just missing Christ as there are of finding him ; and the missing is a matter of self-interest. You cannot love through self-interest, although you can, after a fashion, copy the manners of love. And therein is the gist of the thing that we are just now planning to attempt. Is it to be the real thing or an imitation ?

Yet I am glad and thankful that at least old theoretical notions have vanished for many of us, destroyed in the Great Wars of nations and classes and of commercial aims and practices. That is indeed a gain. And, after all, the history of the rise of mankind is marked throughout by stages in the discovery of good through the trial of evil. " How shall a man find his way unless he lose it ? " The first family, the first tribe

and the first nation owed their existence to self-interest; yet they have all taught us of love, and, if we had not been so stupid, would have taught us more and saved us many of the rough lessons in love by which we may have to learn now. By trial and error, then, we who refuse to discover God in other ways, must slowly come to see that at least we cannot invent a better way than his.

Undoubtedly, too, philosophers and scientific men, thinkers, their ideas, influence the body politic far more deeply and thoroughly than the body politic knows. "Prevailing studies," Berkeley says, "are of no small consequence to a State, the religion, manners, and civil Government of a country ever taking some bias from its philosophy, which affects not only the minds of its professors and students, but also the opinions of all the better sort and the practice of the whole people remotely." May be, the war with Germany has shown us that Berkeley is justified by present facts. You have only to read Houston Chamberlain on *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, or Treitschke, to see how the mechanistic biology affected the political outlook, and thence came to be expressed in the ruinous conflict of the twentieth century. And since biology is no longer mechanistic its influence

will be radically different. So thought and practical experience will work, we may dare to hope, together, in preparing us to open our minds, at least, if not our hearts, to receive the Gospel of new life, more life, greater life, won through love and service, in place of the mocking tale of a conquest of it by dominance and force and greed.

* * *

April 23rd.—Samuel Butler says that "the development of all new religions follows much the same general course. In all cases the times are more or less out of joint—older faiths are losing their hold upon the masses." And you have only to find "a personality strong in itself, and made to seem still stronger by association with some transcendent miracle," to have your "new" religion. I quarrel with that word "new" but not seriously with anything else. Every religion has its alliance with religions of the past. I would say that religions change, and some die; but that none is altogether new. Sir James Frazer will show that clearly, if no one else does. But on the whole Butler is right. And because our own times are badly out of joint and the Christian Faith, in the fashion in which is has been popularly understood, is losing

or has lost its hold upon the masses, there is only one chance for religion among us if the signs of past history are worth anything as guides to the time to come. A great personality, a transcendent miracle not only possible but actual—and men will be attracted, and will discover religion, whether for the first time or once again.

Must we be anxious, then, about the religion of Christ? Are we to fear that the gates not of hell but of heaven will prevail against it? Must we look for another great personality to supersede Christ Jesus?

Some would answer "yes" to these questions. But I am certain that they have never known Christ. They have never drunk of his fountain of living water nor seen his beauty. They have not tried to exhaust him and failed; they have not found in their own experience that he is "new every morning." Those who have known him discover that as they grow in their "wisdom and stature" he grows; and that when they look back on their outgrown selves they see a Christ who was then all-sufficing, but is now outgrown too.

The Christian religion has always at hand a new great personality for its revivifying; and the miracle accompanying that personality never ceases. It grows with our growth and with his

growth in us; and for us also, as our vision of him opens out.

Of no other religion, that is, of no other manner of religion, can this be truly said. And because it can be truly said of the Christian religion we are entitled to our Christian confidence. "There is something true and divinely revealed" (I think it was Newman who said so, and I quote from memory) "in every religion upon earth"; but none has for its originator and inspirer One for whom we may justly claim that he is the only way of eternal life for every man of every race and every time; One whose promise to be always with men has been kept in the letter as well as in the Spirit,—a personality both eternal and historical, to be seen and heard in Palestine across the centuries, "touched, tasted and handled" there, as well as known by his Spirit ever being given into the spirits of men. "There is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the Life of God in the soul." This life, we say, is the eternal, universal Christ's. It is Christ who enlightens "every man that cometh into the world," with the divine light in which all men may find the divine life. "The Spirit of the Lord filleth the whole round world."

I go back in memory to those books on the life of our Lord Jesus Christ which I was reading

when I began these diary notes; I think of the many "Lives" of him that have been written and the many more that doubtless will be written; I think, too, of the innumerable moments in which men have rediscovered him in new loveliness and power, and found him filling them with new light, new love, new life, and seeming to them newly glorified in a glory of God and man not seen before. And then fear drops away from me, unfaith too. "Back to Christ as our fathers saw him!" is not my cry; what I would cry aloud, if I could make myself heard, is "Onward to Christ as no one has seen him yet!" He awaits us, he calls us; he is lifted up once more; and now as before he would draw all men to him.

"Hearken to me, ye children of the Immortal, dwellers of the heavenly worlds, I have known the Supreme Person who comes as light from the dark beyond." That is what every Christian man should say to any man who thinks that the world needs a new personality to revive religion for it. We know the Supreme Person, "the Beauty old as new."

When a great artist has painted for us some landscape with which we had thought ourselves familiar, and we see it after drinking in his revelation of it, do we not see everything in that

moor and stream, that hillside under the cloud-flecked sky, transfigured? So it is with the sublime artistry of Christ. He transfigures lives, knowledge, experience, our whole world outlook; and he transfigures himself. As we share his Spirit we find him ever different though the same, Beauty indeed, and though old yet new; and we see all things through "eyes of God" we never had before.

In our deepest social and personal unrest, in the worst days that have come or are to come upon the Christian religion, there may be heard the summons to us to arise and go to him, that he may show us what he is now, *now* in our latest need. We alone among men of religion the world over are gloriously aware that we have at hand our potent Supreme Person, with his ever authentic human miracle of more life and in abundance. What he does is his witness and the proof of his enduring supremacy; what he is, no man knows until he finds him for himself, and every man may unceasingly know afresh. "Before Abraham was, *I am.*"

I see that my diary need not be carried further. Just as the testing of my religion in my old diary led me to realize more of what Christ means; so the terrible searching of the years from 1914

until now has done me the same service. I have seen the failure of organized religion as it is, of the Church in all its modes and moods as it is; but I have realized as I never did before the unshaken foundation of our Christian Faith and the power of Christ to revive our dead bones. It comes to this for me: The continuity of the life-process demands of Churches and of men a rising from one order of life to another. Man is still life's open way of advance, as he was when his great brain was being shaped out, that indefinitely flexible instrument for a personal being's use. And his indefinitely flexible social instruments, Churches, States and so forth, keep open his way of community before him. If he does not travel in the way of life he goes back. History shows it, experience proves it. Animals may remain mere eddies of restricted lives turning round and round in a well-beaten track; but animals that have become persons may not, on pain of losing all personal values of life and forfeiting the destiny it holds for them. They are vitally incomplete as no mere animal is. "It is of the nobility of man's soul that he is insatiable." "Wants are the bands and cements between God and us."

So I recognize the firm foundation of the Christian Faith in our nature, and the in-

estimable, the everlasting, the temporal and the eternal value of Christ for our nature and our faith. We win new life and pass to growth in its eternal order only as his Spirit of life penetrates our spirits and communicates his life. To that winning I see no end, because eternal life has no end, nor has God. And the whole process means for me spiritual and personal advance in union with God and with all who are his. We became "capable of God" when we became true men. Thenceforth our biological advance, in the strict sense of the term, was in his company, our biological failure in the loss of it. "*Il paraît juste de voir dans la vie le trait d'union de la science et de la religion.*"

To write this little book has been for me a work that will abide with me, I think, to the end of my days on earth. It is a great matter to see as never before the mission of Christ, and his power as life-giver to the world. I hope I have overcome once for all the temptation to doubt of the future of his religion as it will come to be expressed in the Christian Church, however certain I may be of the inadequacy of its expression now.

That these scattered and more or less disconnected notes may suggest to some readers a

remedy for their own doubts and fears seems to me now a great part of my justification for writing them. But, as I have said, they have done me good. And I can assure any reader (and however critical he may be I hope he will believe me), that the book is a genuine record of my feelings and my thoughts as I was writing. It is not a literary trade-product; it has come in all possible frankness from my heart and mind.

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